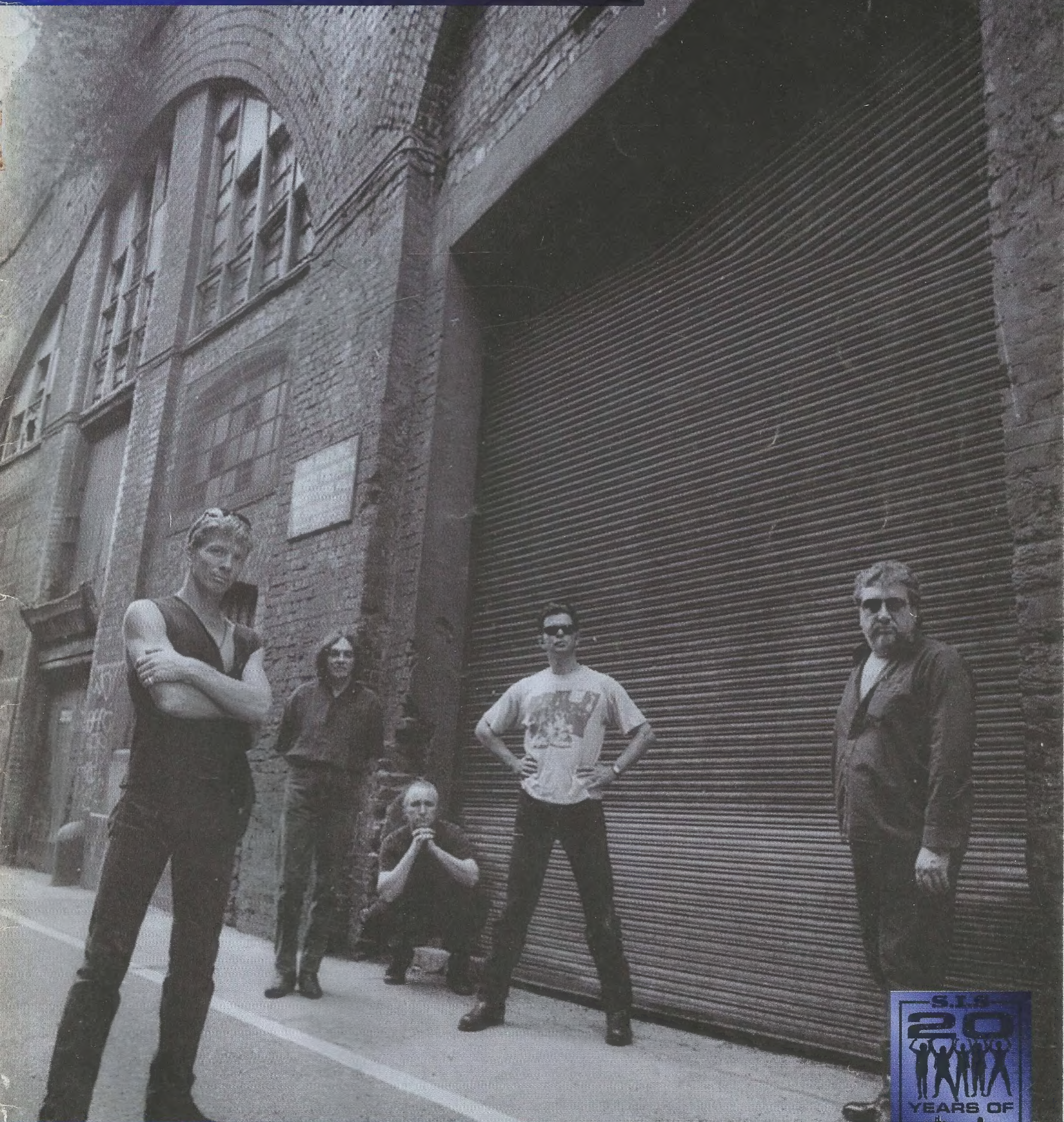


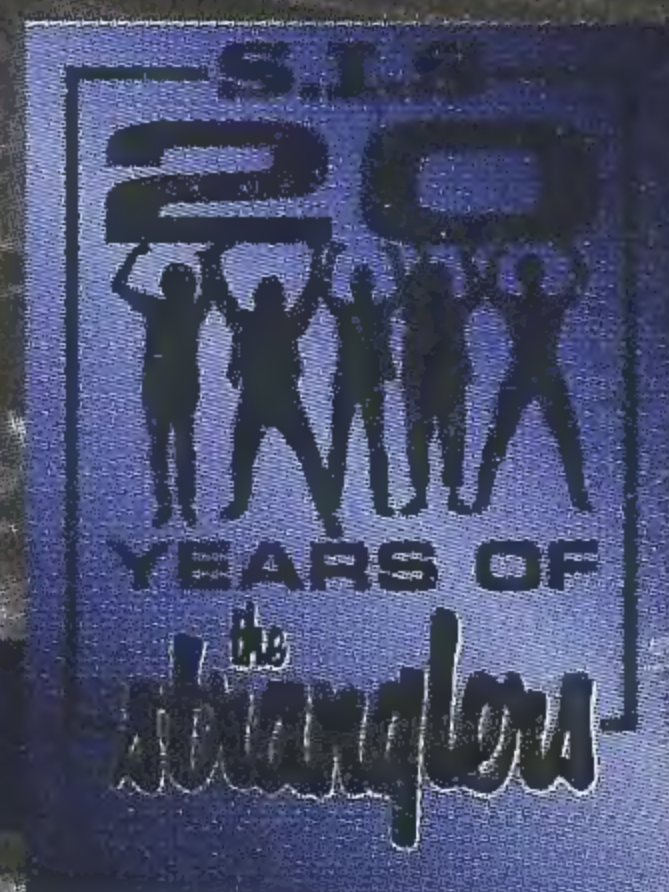
strangled

Volume 2 Number 43

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THE VOICE OF THE STRANGLERS



Strangled

Volume 2
MAY 1995

Number 43

Stranglers Information Service
PO BOX 195
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CB4 2QJ

PLEASE INCLUDE A STAMPED ADDRESSED
ENVELOPE WITH ALL ENQUIRIES

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Sally Buckingham, Carl Davey, Tim Bruce,
Pam Greenfield, Jon Peachey, Chelsea Danny,
Jez Jackaman, Hannah Holder, Stephen Ross,
Michael Clement and You!

Front cover: Michael Clement for BACUP



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EDITORIAL

Pause for a moment if you will, and picture this little scenario: A musty office somewhere in Kings Reach Tower. From one corner comes the sound of calculator keys tapping as one hack, surrounded by a pile of receipts, feverishly adds up a week's lunch expenses. At the next desk a (free promotional) pencil is chewed as its owner struggles to justify in typically verbose fashion why 'Igbog and the Moonies' are the future of rock & roll and why *he* is the future of journalism and probably the new Messiah as well, when he gets a spare minute. Suddenly the door flies open and framed in the doorway is journo No. 3, face all aglow with the sheer excitement that only a juicy bit of gossip can inspire. "Can you *believe* it? Those fuckin' old punk has-beens the Stranglers have been havin' a go at our Justine" (gasps of "surely not Tarquin?!" echo around the room). They're accusing Elastica of nicking a riff from one of their rancid old songs - 'No More Heroes' ". "Oh I remember that one, I actually thought it was a really good track and..." the errant journo is promptly silenced by looks of sheer disgust and sent away to re-read 'Pretension - Its Application In The Workplace' with a stern warning that he can expect to find his cards on the desk, should such a slip-up occur again. All the assembled boys and girls immediately resolve to take up arms - well biros anyway, in defence of Elastica, "and the first item on the agenda" asserts Jocasta de la Cred, "is an interview with Justine, telling the world how she has been so mistreated, exploited and abused by those evil, misogynist, bigots - It'll shock the nation."

But it didn't quite work out like that cherubs, did it? One week down the line and the scene in that same office was, no doubt, very different. Not only was Justine, along with the rest of Elastica, only too keen to stress that not only was there no 'war' between the two bands but yes, she did acknowledge them as a major influence; yes they were an OK bunch of guys. Shit, they even hung out with them socially while sojourning at the same rehearsal studio last year. "It's too horrible for words - they drank in the same pub - aaargh!!" So what was to be done when it came to publishing the interviews? - the inky papers could either risk pissing off one of their favourite bands by editing out some of the most salient points, or commit personal sacrilege by putting something 'nice' about the Stranglers in print for the first time in aeons. Well I don't know about you, but the word 'Scuppered' can't help but spring to my mind, and it's been with no small sense of satisfaction that I've read those interviews over recent weeks. Full respect to Elastica for their sheer guts and honesty and for not allowing what was, in actual fact, a quibble between publishers to upset the applecart (*and* for using that riff to such blistering effect!) I'd like to be able to say that at last the press were doing a bit of 'waking up' themselves when it comes to the Stranglers, but the years have probably hit me too hard with the reality stick for that.

With the launch of the new album upon us it really is heartening to see how many bands and artists are, as JJ puts it in the interview on page 16, 'coming out of the closet' and admitting that "er, yeah, we really like the Stranglers actually". Look, OK, I'm biased. If you're trying to disguise your appreciation of the Stranglers, editing *Strangled* is a bit of a giveaway after all! But I'm not about to bleat on about how the Stranglers are the only good band on the planet - they're not; how I never listen to anything by anyone else (I do, extensively) and anybody walking into the SIS office carrying a CD by gasp!, *another band*, is faced with a crucifix and cast out onto Satan's streets - they're more likely to be appreciatively welcomed in and the CD player cranked up a notch. (To be that blinkered is no compliment to the Stranglers anyway - how do you know they're great if you have nothing to compare them to?). What I *am* saying (as I have done time and again, no doubt to the irritation of my kith and kin who are left screaming "OK, OK, we get the soddin' point!") is that for a band to capture the imagination, and the heart and soul as the Stranglers did mine and countless others over 20 years ago, and then not only hang onto it but continually surprise, excite and entertain for two decades, picking up an army of new followers along the way...well, need I continue?... As a final word to certain elements of the music press (though I don't flatter myself that any of you are listening) - Your job is to report on what is happening, unhampered by ego or personal kudos. No-one is asking you to like the Stranglers, and reviews, by their very nature, can only ever be subjective, so if a live performance doesn't appeal to you no one can prevent you from saying so, but to totally ignore their (or any band's) existence is to show no respect for your readership. We've seen almost five years of sold out venues and a consistently prolific output of new material since Paul & John made their appearance - material that thousands of fans have deemed worthy of their time and attention - who are *you* to decide that they have no right to read about it in a music press which *their* money finances? The Stranglers are not 'back', they never went away. Deal with it.

OK, rant over for now, but I'm sure you'll appreciate that there's only so much that a gal can tolerate before hitting the 'aaargh!!!' button! I'm not going to say that 'About Time' is a good album. 'About Time' is an absolutely bloody amazing album, and if anyone was left with any lingering shreds of doubt whatsoever around the release of 'In The Night', fear no more. This is the Stranglers at their ballsy, rocking, darkly magnificent best. *Strangled* still has no intention of being obsequiously reverential towards the Stranglers - (they'd soon have something to say about it if we were!) but I can honestly say that SIS is proud to give the new release the full endorsement it deserves. Check it out for yourselves, and hear it live in May and June. SIS and the Stranglers are looking forward to hearing *your* views.

See y'all on tour! -

Marian

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Strangled NEWS

ABOUT TIME? WE'LL QUITE

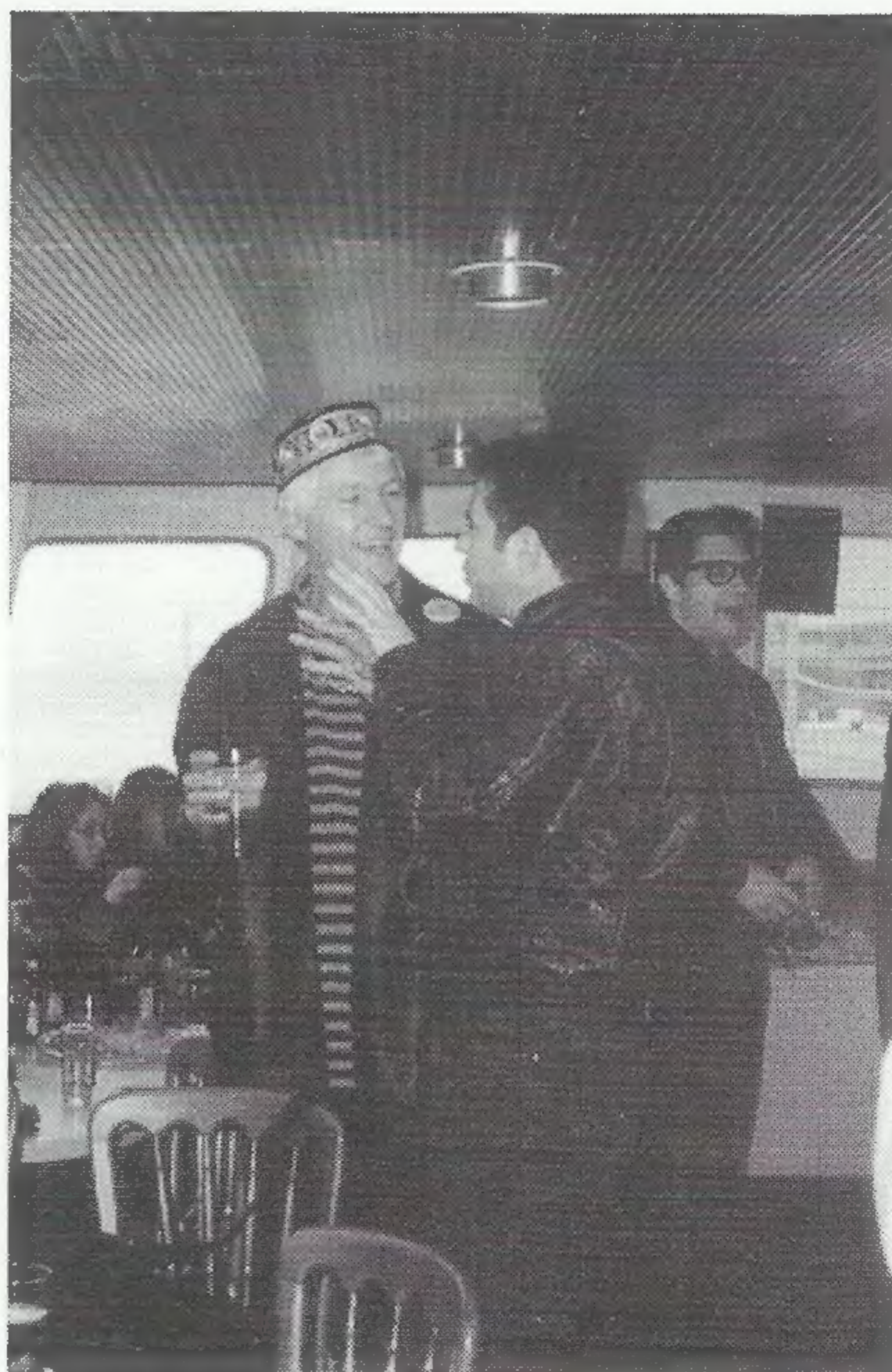
On May 15th the long awaited new album by the Stranglers finally makes its debut. 'About Time' is the very first release on the new When? label through Castle Communications, and features 11 tracks, some of which you'll be familiar with through the band's many live outings last year, some with which your ears won't have been previously acquainted. Naturally a fair bit of this issue of

Strangled relates to the release, and when you hear it for yourselves I know you'll understand why we've felt the need to wax lyrical so extensively about it. Turn to Nik Yeomans' review on page 15 for a full track rundown and review.

Castle have informed us that the Radio One sessions album release has been put back until late August, but it's definitely happening, so hang in there.

And The Boat Sailed By...

Thursday 20th April 1995. The day is bright but there is still chill breeze whipping around the legs of the assortment of Stranglers, band employees and crew, record company and press bods gathering together on Charing Cross Pier awaiting the arrival of the 'Mayflower Garden'. I am wondering whether this would have been a good time to introduce rubber rings and life-jackets-in-black (with rat motif, naturally) to the SIS merchandise range. Dave is well aware that a life on the ocean wave can be a nippy business, and has come equipped with an item of chunky knitwear in anticipation. Paul, as usual, is bouncing around like Daffy Duck on acid. The reason for all this? (the gathering together I mean - Paul's psyche would take more than just a brief explanation). To mark the launch of 'About Time' we were all to be launched down the Thames on the aforementioned vessel for a bit of an album listening and root beer quaffing session in its honour. Among the dignitaries in attendance were a very chirpy (as well he deserves to be) Alan Winstanley, Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson, Miss Finland(!) and Captain Sensible, who I'm very pleased to say has indicated his willingness to be interviewed for



"This is a seagull - now I'll show you how an Osprey goes" - JJ and Captain Sensible.

a future ish' of your very own magazine, with a beaming smile and the words "Love to - I'll do anything for a fiver" (SIS has already begun saving, and we're now up to £1.38 and a couple of foreign coins, so we should be OK in time for *Strangled* 44). Before speaking to Mr. Sensible I mentioned to my dear friend and colleague (and any more cracks like that one in your album review and you're dead meat my lad) Nik Yeomans that I'd 'really like to do an interview with the Captain'. He looked absolutely aghast and exclaimed something along the lines of 'Oh God, how desperate can you be? Do you really think anyone will be interested in that? Are you really that short of interviewees?' I have to say that as I know that Nik is a keen Damned fan I was a tad perplexed until I realized that the silly arse hadn't noticed the arrival of the good Captain S. and had thought I meant the geezer with the jaunty peaked cap who was steering the bloody boat! Embarrassed now Nik? Oh *good*. I am pleased to report that everyone returned relatively unscathed after our little voyage east to the Docklands and back, the only problem being that once off the boat nobody could blame the movement of the vessel for their inability to walk in a straight line, and the merriment was to continue at a public house of good repute near the Embankment for some hours afterwards. Hic.



Top photo: Rusty



Photo: Marian

Being away from dry land often affects people in strange and disturbing ways.

The Stranglers on the Road - Spring 1995

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that with the new release comes a monumental upsurge in Stranglers public activity, so there'll be plenty of opportunities for you to see and hear the band live over the coming months. Listed below is the full information available at time of the going to press of gig dates, in-store appearances and media activity for May/June. As always (and I do have to keep re-emphasising this because we still occasionally get disgruntled letters of the 'why didn't you let me know?' variety) as gig news usually comes in to SIS in fits and starts and we simply cannot afford to do a full mail out with fragments of unconfirmed information every time there has been some slight progress or change in the band's plans, **if you wish to be given the most up to date information about forthcoming gigs as possible, please send in a stamped self-addressed envelope marked 'Tour Dates' (letting me know the last ones that you have been made aware of, so I don't send you info. that you already have) and the moment news comes it will be mailed out to you.** Hundreds of you have responded to our earlier requests and have been doing this, and accordingly have been kept as up to date as possible, but to everyone else, it really is appreciated if you can help us to help you. Many thanks.

GIGS

May

- 6 Gosport Festival, Hants.
- 27 Sprung '95 Festival, United Counties Showground, Camarthen, Dyfed.

June

- 2 Bristol, Colston Hall
- 3 Empire, Shepherd Bush
- 4 Norwich UEA
- 5 Wolverhampton Civic Hall
- 7 Leeds Town & Country
- 8 Manchester Academy
- 9 Glasgow Barrowlands
- 10 Liverpool Royal Court

IN-STORE APPEARANCES

(Featuring a set of approx. 30 minutes)

May

- 15 Tower, Piccadilly Circus, London 5.00pm
- 16 HMV, Birmingham 1pm
- 17 Virgin Megastore, Argyle St, Glasgow 1pm (STV will be filming this appearance)
- 18 HMV, Manchester 5.30pm

(NB we'd advise you to double check with the stores re. exact times incase of alteration)

RADIO

May

- 11 10.30am GLR Radio - live session
- 12 5.00pm Virgin Radio - acoustic live/chat
- 15 10.30am Simon Bates, London News AM - live interview

The above are all that were confirmed at time of going to press - further radio sessions could be added at a later date.



VIDEO SHOOT

If the band had any notion of treating themselves to a bit of a lie in after the launch party they were out of luck. At 10.30 the next morning, all were required to be at The Pump House in Rotherhithe for the purpose of shooting the video for 'About Time's lead track 'Golden Boy'. A full report on the shooting of this and indeed *all* the Stranglers videos to date will be featured in *Strangled* 44, but one memory of the day to recount now is Paul, having spied one of his most favourite objects in the world (oh, per-lease, can we keep this at least a little bit tasteful) a *football*, deciding to occupy himself between takes with a bit of a kick-around. Shortly afterwards all conversation was abruptly halted with a *Thwack, Crash, Shatter* "oops" and one of the windows of the Pump House was no more. As you'll see from the pic., a deeply shamed(?) P. Roberts attempted to do the decent thing and clear up after his (totally accidental I'm sure) misdemeanour. He did his penance some while later though, as when the rest of the band had done all that was required of them on the shoot and they and the rest of us had long since gone home, Paul was there until



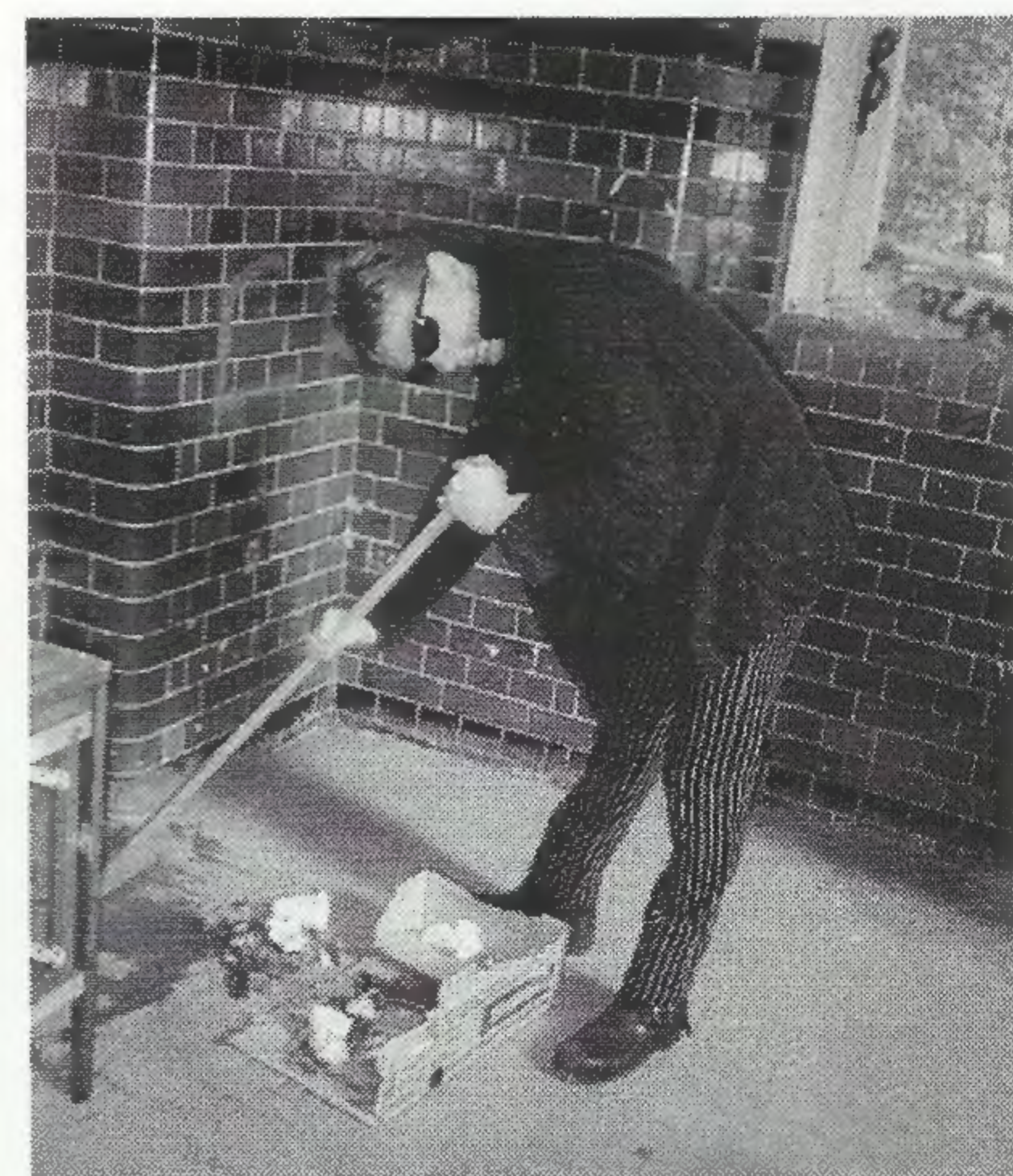
The nice lady at the Pump House did forgive him... eventually.

MANAGEMENT CORNER

It's been a long-standing source of amusement between myself and Messrs. Willcox and Long that whenever I call them for updates on forthcoming band tour and release projects the stock answer is "nothing confirmed as yet, but here's a joke for you..." Therefore, in order to keep you fully aware of the cut and thrust of Stranglers inter-company relations, I will be featuring an offering 'straight from the boardroom table' each issue - we kick off with this little piece of classified information proffered, during a recent highly intense business telephone conference with myself at SIS, by one Mr. Trevor Long. (For best effect, this should be read in a full-on Black Country/Brum accent).

'She was only a coal miner's daughter, but she had plenty of slack in her drawers'.

Yes. Thank you for sharing that with us Trevor. (Strewth).



well past the bedtime of decent God-fearing folk, and for the purpose of the shoot was being filmed, as he so poetically puts it, "almost stark bollock-naked" in the, by now, sub zero temperatures of the aircraft hanger-like building. Ahhhh.

SIS DOES ITS BIT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS!

Some news that I received a short while ago has left me with the uncontrollable urge to break out in spontaneous exclamations of 'worra lorra lorra good news chooks', don a spangly suit and stilettos and wipe a joyful tear from my eye. "She really has lost it this time - pass the straightjacket" - the *Strangled Readership*. Don't worry, I do still have a few marbles left intact. The cause of the outbreak of Cilla-ism is that you may remember several *Strangleds* ago my mentioning that Gabi from Romania was keen to hear from other subscribers around the globe. You may also remember that an issue or two later, UK subscriber and regular contributor to *Strangled* Cliv Medlicott went out to Romania to visit Gabi

and her brother Sorin, and everyone got on very well. *Extremely* well as it happens, because at the end of April Gabi and Cliv were married in Romania, and will shortly be settling down to a life of wedded bliss in the UK. Heartfelt Congratulations from SIS and the Stranglers to both Gabi and Cliv (and and big thanks from me for your kind invitation to attend which only the release of a certain album and latest issue of *Strangled* sadly prevented me from accepting - I can confirm that a glass or two was sunk in your honour at SIS Towers!). Hopefully we'll have a photo or two of the big day in time for publication in the next issue. Ooh, excuse me, I've come over all emotional...



when!

the
stranglers
ABOUT TIME

Due to the amount of space taken up by material about the new album, part 2 of Paul Holland's dissertation extracts will appear in *Strangled* 44.

J.J's Wild Fancy Dress Christmas Party

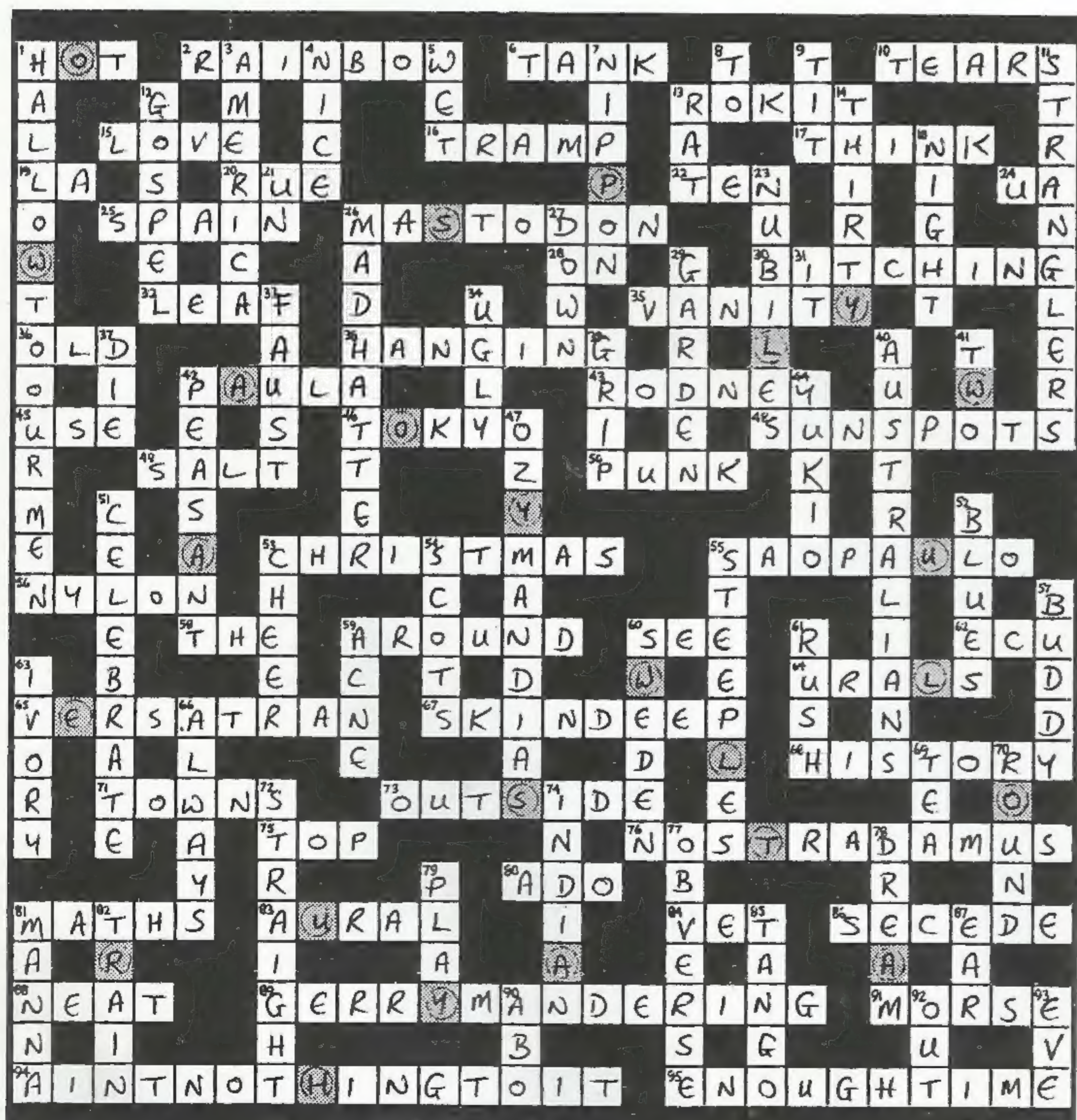
Thursday 22nd December

Join us at J.J's after work with your colleagues for an early Christmas drink and enjoy our Happy Hour

Sent in by Nigel Barrett, Bedford.

Eee, we 'ad a grand time!

STRANGLED PRIZE CROSSWORD WINNER



Adage: You'll always reap what you sow. Won by Julia Sharman, Nottingham.

Renewal Prize Draw

This issue it's the turn of Mike Abbott of Leamington Spa to have the t-shirt-as-a-reward-for-quick-renewal bestowed upon him (you lucky little tike you!).

REVENGE IS SAVOURY

It seems that not only are new generation bands happy to admit a fondness for the Stranglers, in some cases so great is their obsession that the poor lovelorn souls are determined to hear the sound of their idols' voices, whatever the time of day or night, as illustrated by a little story told to me by JJB as he supped tea at SIS recently. A couple of months back, while JJ was away from home, his wife was awoken by a 'phone call at around 6am, only to hear a slurred voice announcing that it was Oasis on the line and requesting to speak to Jean Jacques Burnel. I could fully understand it if she had told them where to shove their request, but she politely explained that JJ was not there, and she'd let him know they called. It transpired that Oasis' most recent album was produced by Owen Morris, the very same Owen Morris who had engineered, among others, all the Purple Helmets recordings, Un Jour Parfait, co-engineered Dreamtime and several of the Stranglers 12" releases. During a heavy night on the bottle with his current charges Oasis they'd thought it'd be a really good idea to have a bit of a phone around and chat to as many people who sufficiently took their fancy as possible (regardless of the ungodly hour). Owen, naturally had JJ's number, and willingly volunteered it, hence the drunken disturbance of Madame Burnel's sleep. Not violently miffed, but still keen to redress the balance for the intrusion JJ, on hearing the tale, firstly asked Sil to check things out and verify that it really was Oasis who made the call (it was - apparently they'd hassled about 20 other people that night and their management had been landed with the job of apologizing profusely to several irritated people the next day) and then to find out the name and address of the studio where the band were working. Sil did this, and, after making sure that the band were on the premises, ordered over £300 worth of cash on delivery pizza in the name of Owen Morris and had them sent down to the studio. I would hazard a guess that the next alcoholic gathering took place as far away from anything even vaguely resembling a telephone as possible, and Owen Morris almost certainly will never want to look at another pizza as long as he lives. People would therefore do well to remember that if you messa witha da Stranglers dey senda da boysa round (witha da cheese, ana da tomato deep pan witha da side order of garlic bread).

MERCHANDISE NEWS

NEW T-SHIRTS

And out of the swag bag this issue I am happy to be able to pull two brand new t-shirts, designed exclusively for SIS by Simon J. Webb (well why not stick with 'own brands' when they perform so well?!)

First up is a design inspired by the album title. Our **'About Time'** shirt features a very arty image based around the noble features of Albert Einstein, who, probably above anyone else, had a few interesting little theories himself 'about time'. JJ was particularly impressed with this design, and like the 'Time To Die' shirt introduced with Strangled 43, it should provide a bit of a talking point for those by whom it is observed (which is just a round about way of saying it's the business, OK?!). The shirt is available as both a black (with white design) and white (with, surprise, surprise, black design) **long sleeve**, with the words 'About Time' down one sleeve.

Price is **£16 (UK) £18 (Europe) and £20 (WW)**



Secondly, a short sleeve t-shirt featuring an image of the mean & moody 'don't mess with us' shot(!) from the cover of this issue of *Strangled*. This is a short sleeved black shirt, with the design in white and 'SIS' on the left sleeve in red. I personally think that this is one of the best shots of the band that I've seen in a long time, and it works to particularly good effect as a shirt design, so it certainly shouldn't disgrace your wardrobe (or your chest!).

The price on this one is **£13.00 (UK) £14.00 (Europe) and £16.00 (WW)**

Both shirts feature the official SIS merchandise logo in red.

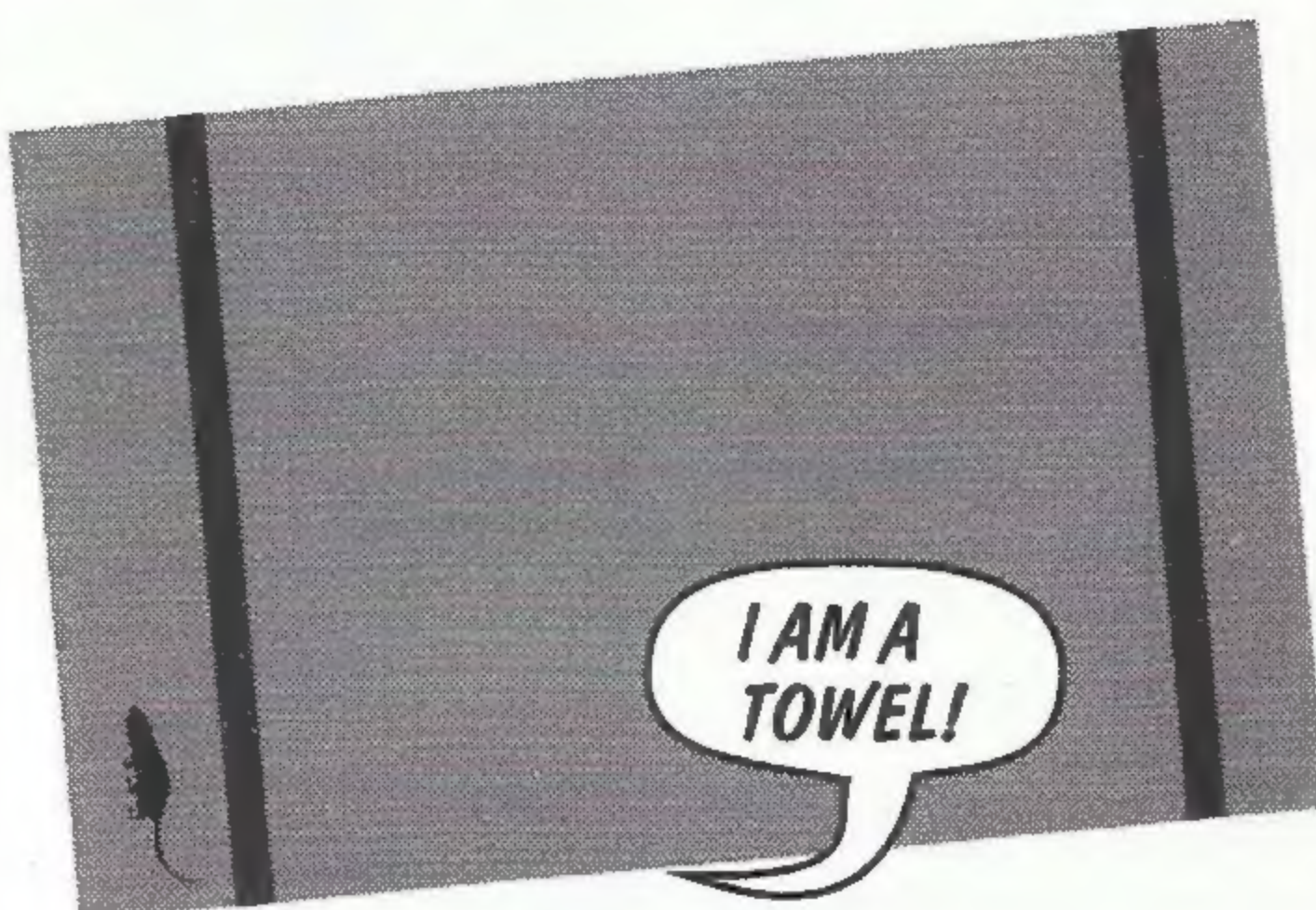


BLACK & WHITE PHOTO

It's been a while since we've had an A4 b/w band photo for sale, so to rectify that situation the shot pictured (far right) is available for **£2.00 (UK) £3.00 (Europe) and £4.00 (WW)**

EMBROIDERED BATH TOWELS

When I conducted my subscribers' merchandise survey some while ago, one request that cropped up frequently was the return of the embroidered bath sheets/towels that SIS supplied several light years ago. It took a while to find a supplier as it seemed that everyone I approached stepped back, shook their heads and sucked the air through their teeth (in the style of most garage mechanics/plumbers etc. when asked for a quote) and said "nah, sorry luv - blue, I can get you; pink, I can get you; sea green with puce spots, I can get you, but black...? No demand y'see" etc. etc. Well at last I have tracked down a supplier who can provide the fluffiest, softest and **blackest** bath towels that you could wish for (the SIS office is already festooned with them - you



go through a lot of towels here, what with all these grubby musicians trooping through day in and day out). Generously sized, they come embroidered with a vibrant green rat motif - very stylish (and being black they don't show marks so quickly, so there's a bonus for any little grime merchants among you - yuk!)

The towels are **£12.00 (UK) £13 (Europe) and £14.50 (WW)**

NEW VIDEO

The next in the SIS video collection is currently in production and should be ready within one month (hopefully less). We would greatly appreciate advance orders, as it helps me to gauge the number of orders and ensure that I am able to get it produced.

This time it's something a little bit different. You'll remember that the Bodysearch video was kept to a one hour production as we had to extract certain new tracks until after the release of the album. Well, we can now go ahead, but to make things a lot more interesting all these remaining Shepherds Bush tracks will be interspersed with 'fly on the wall' footage shot by Paul Roberts and other members of the band and crew during the second recording session for 'About Time' at Parr Street studios, Liverpool. Marvel at the honourable Alan Winstanley at work (and play), laugh hysterically as Paul hurtles down the studio bannister (and lands flat on his face at the bottom), wrinkle your nose in distaste at the antics that follow the discovery of an electronic 'dismembered hand' that had obviously been left there by studio staff for resident bands to play with, and in the midst of all this merriment there was, of course, some serious work going on to produce the monumental piece of work that is 'About

Time'. Without the presence of an outside film crew, this is as 'behind the scenes' as you could ever wish to get, and I certainly found it both fascinating and extremely funny viewing. **The Parr Street Chronicles** includes the live Shepherds Bush performances of Money, The Face, Paradise Row, Down In The Sewer and Always The Sun. **To make things even more interesting we're running a little competition in connection with this release. During one of the pieces of Parr Street footage Paul comments on an object that you normally wouldn't expect to find in a recording studio and poses a question about it. Name the object and answer the question and send it in to SIS by August 1st 1995. The first 3 correct entries pulled from the pile by JJ will each win an SIS merchandise voucher for £30.** The price of The Parr Street Chronicles video is: **£15. (UK) £17 (Europe) and £19.00 (WW)**

Illustrated merchandise sheets picturing and detailing all currently available items are available from SIS on request with an SAE.

A huge thanks to everyone who wrote in to say they how much they enjoyed 'Strangled From Birth & Beyond' and 'Un Jour Parfait' - your support is really encouraging, and I sincerely hope to be able to extend further the range of CD releases on the SIS label in the near future.

GOING GOING...

There are several merchandise items of which we have very little left in stock, and which have now removed from the order form as they will be discontinued when the current stocks are gone. Some of these items are available at a discount and if you should wish to order any of the following, please make sure that you enclose a separate cheque from that sent for items still on the order form, just in case we've sold out before receiving your order.

Black long sleeve 'icon' shirts (size L only) **£12 (UK) £13 (Eur) (£14 WW)** (very few)

White short sleeve 'Front Bench' shirts **£8 (UK) £9 (Eur) £10 (WW)**

'Blue Image' short sleeve black t-shirts **£8 (UK) £9 (Eur) £10 (WW)**

'Time To Die' special mix promo CDs **£8 (UK) £9 (Eur) £10 (WW)** (very few)

V. large 'Ten' and 'Greatest Hits' posters (see Strangled 42) **£5.00 (UK) £6 (Eur) (£7 WW)**

SIS 1992 World Convention video (including first live performance of material from 'Strangers In The Night') **£10 (UK) £12 (Eur) 14 (WW)**



Paul Roberts talks to Alan Winstanley

After a 15 year absence, Alan Winstanley decided to mark a few fingernails on the new album 'About Time'.

It was the summer of '79 when Alan realized his first production 'The Raven', after 4 years of engineering the band's first demos and their first 3 albums with Martin Rushent. He has since produced all of Madness' records, along with his partner Clive Langer and many others on the way including Elvis Costello, Lloyd Cole, the Teardrop Explodes, Bowie, Morrissey (hi John) and the Neville Brothers. Alan & Clive also co-own 'Westside Studios' in London. A very successful unassuming Mr. Winstanley did bread & water with me.

"Knock Knock"

P: You don't have to knock y'know. Now, sit down and make yourself comfortable. So, how did you get into music and why?

A: Well, originally I wanted to play guitar in a band, basically like my heroes at that time, who were Clapton & Hendrix - it was the early 70s. I actually grew up with the Beatles, theirs were the first records I bought and they obviously influenced me a lot. Never being much of a singer I took up the guitar and soon realized I was never going to be like the guys, even if I played all day every day. Anyway, suddenly I thought 'who's this producer guy, who is this George Martin?, Phil Spector?

P: Easy that one. Phil Spector was Captain Scarlet's boss.

A: ... Why did those records always jump out at you on the radio? It intrigued me. I just thought "That's it, I want to be a record producer".

P: Did you do any kind of 'apprenticeship' as it were?

A: Well I had to make a decision about which way to go. Basically that is the engineering route or the singer/songwriter route where you can get yourself a publishing deal - they give you a recording budget and you can practise being a producer, doing your own demos, and although I wrote songs even I realised I wasn't a great songwriter so I took the engineering route. There was a music shop in Fulham called 'TW' where I'd hang out on Saturdays annoying the staff, getting all the guitars from the wall and playing them all day. Well one day I discovered they had a basement, so I suggested they build a studio, a 4 track in there, so they said "no, we don't know

anything about studios". Well I just said I did and knew nothing about it. Anyway, I asked a guy in the shop who was a chippy to build it, fibreglass on the walls and egg boxes on the ceiling...

P: Wow nice! Just like Westside.

A: They bought a 'Teac' 4 track and a desk and we set it all up, advertised in MM at £3.50 per hour and that was it. The phones went mad, they took bookings and slung me in the deep end, which was great 'cause I never was a teaboy or tape op. Instead they said "right, you know about this gear, get on with it". I knew nothing, I just twiddled the knobs until it sounded good and I do that to this day.

P: I prefer the idea of 'if it sounds great, leave it'. I don't read music but it has never stopped me writing a song - technicality bores me on the whole.

A: After some time this place made a fortune - £3.50 ph was still cheap in 70/71 - enabling the owners to buy the property next door, so they put an 8-track set up in there, I was kind of promoted and got a friend of mine to run the 4 track. The 8 track was £8.50 ph.

P: Hey! A pound a track.

A: Almost, yeah.....and then they went 16 track...laughs

P: Don't tell me, let me guess....um, er...£16.50 per hour?

A: With a new machine and a bigger desk, and that's when the Stranglers started coming in, mid-70s, probably '75, the disco period, I was making records as an engineer by then.

P: The 'D' word, erm, ah, any particular favourites Al?

A: Well, actually one that I thought was quite good for that period was 'Knock On Wood'

P: By the great Steve Cropper.

A: Yeah, but not his version, Ami Stewart's.

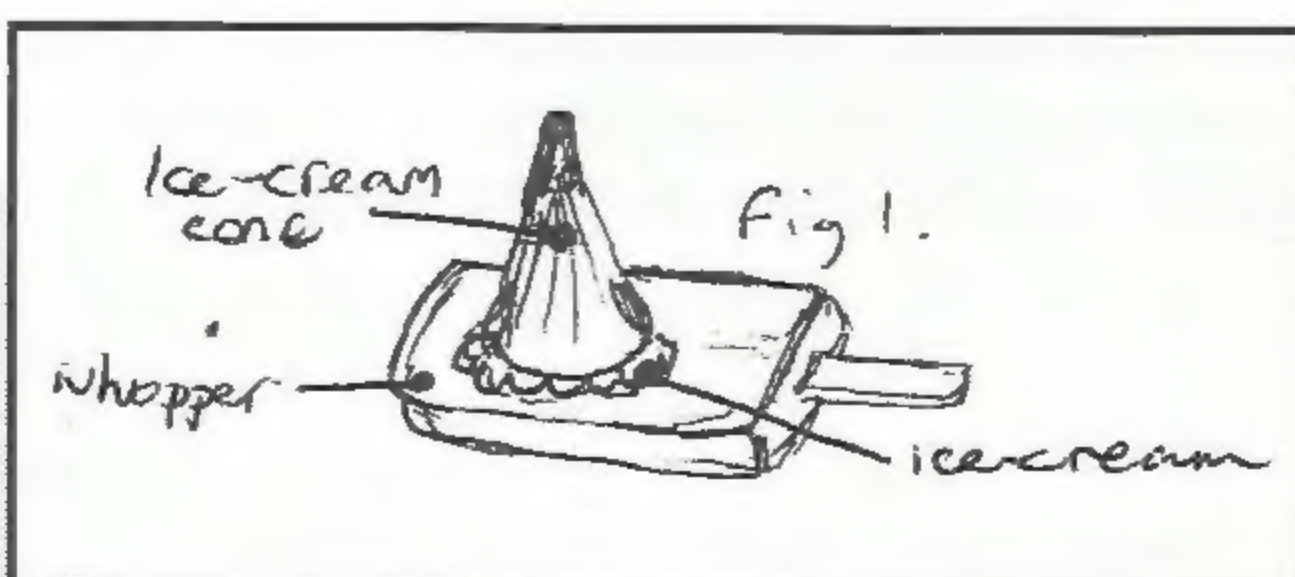
P: Never mind, I think my brother bought it.

A: (sings intro) diddley diddley diddley diddley bum.

P: Yes, very good Al.

A: So I was doing this kind of thing, 'Saturday Night Fever' etc. when one day... this ice cream van pulls up and...

P: You bought a 99 and a whopper and made a witches hat (Fig. 1)



A: Well Jet had bleached blonde hair and Dave wasn't there ...

P: ?!!

A: And they started doing demos with me.

P: Weren't they quite prolific?

A: I can't remember that well really. I just know that I thought they were fresh, - refreshing after all that disco stuff. They came in quite a lot for about 18 months. I knew they were trying to get a deal and then the whole punk thing took off. I remember Martin Rushent coming down. I'd no idea they had a UA deal, and he said "this is the perfect studio for this band I've just signed, 'The Stranglers', and I said I knew them and had done all their demos, so apparently he went back to the band and told them about the studio and they said 'no, we only want to work at TW with Alan Winstanley'. I don't know if it's true or not having not been at the meetings, but the idea seemed to be for Martin to produce 'Grip' and while it was on release, look for someone to do the album, but it was said that they liked what we did so much that they decided to stick with us.

P: So how did you get to do 'The Raven'?

A: Well I'd built up a good relationship with the band, Martin had done 3 albums which is normally quite a lot for a band, they tend to move on after one or two. I had a very good relationship with him, we'd worked together before, and he one day declared himself a producer to the world but no-one rang him up so he went and got himself a job in A&R, so like me he got what he wanted after being an engineer but via A&R.

P: So he could bullshit bands more easily? Do you think you got the job 'cause for all that time you'd caught the 'Stranglers Sound'?

A: Well, to be honest, the studio dictated the sound to a certain degree, for example, the drums - you could have put a mic 20 feet away and it wouldn't have changed the sound, there was no ambience. That up front sound was the room really. The way I remember JJ's sound was that we'd borrowed an 'Ampeg Cambo' amp. from the shop, plugged it in and the speaker was fucked, so that was that sound and we thought, 'mmm, that sounds pretty good' and by 'Rattus' that amp had been fixed and JJ had got himself a big rig and I think we used to turn it right up, so the 'Peaches' sound was more amp distortion and the 'Grip' sound was more like a speaker flapping around.

P: In my experience it's easy to get the same sound in 101 major studios due to standards, but some of the smaller 'hand made' studios have a unique quality which is very hard to achieve anywhere else. I

almost always used the same 16 track tiny studio in Wiltshire for demos. It helps you get the best out of yourself. You engineered 'Raven' as well, right?

A: Not 'alf mate - it was all kind of tricky. We did it in Paris in a strange studio with assistants who I couldn't communicate with properly and, doing your first 'proper' production it was all very nerve racking. I'd given up smoking for two and a half years prior to that, I got on the plane - I am not a good flyer anyway - and the first thing I did on take-off was order a box of cigarettes and continued to smoke for the next 10 years!

P: Was there any shift towards technology or fuss, over-instrumentation etc. the 3 month album which tends to happen to most bands?

A: Not really, it took 6 weeks in all, pretty quick, we used a few loops but Jet always played over them rather than to them.

P: I think the last thing you did was 'Bearcage'. How did you meet Clive?

such", which is exactly what I am doing, so we think alike a lot. In the mixing I'll actually engineer, but when recording I'll use a house engineer.

P: You just love to twiddle really right?

A: Well technically speaking I can't say for example "try 3db in the 5k" 'cause I don't really know what it would sound like - well actually I do know - so it's easier to twiddle. I mean 3k might sound better, I won't know 'til I try.

P: Going back to machines, do you have a preference, I mean anything has it's place one would hope.

A: We've done some stuff with machines and it really hasn't happened for us, I mean we went to New Orleans to record the Neville Brothers and played the rhythm track to their A&R man and he said "yeah, but can't you put a drum machine on it?" (P: In case you don't know it, this is one serious groove of a rhythm section) I mean some of the best things on a record happened 'cause of a mistake and if you had a machine you'd

P: You don't have to...but...

A: No, no, we've been quite lucky really.

P: Oh sod it, nevermind, don't worry, really.

I remember Elvis Costello disappearing for 'half a day'.

A: As far as artistic temperament, I just let it happen...oh actually I've got a great story. You remember 'Marilyn' (for all you youngsters and amnesiacs out there, Marilyn was one of Boy George's associates from the gorgeous pouting gender bending school of fame - Ed.), well we did a song called 'Calling Your Name' which became a big hit so they asked us to do the album. Anyway, we soon realised that 'Calling' was a song he'd obviously been rehearsing for some considerable time in the bathroom and he could sing that one alright, but he wasn't very good at other songs he hadn't practised. We'd be doing a take and never get to the chorus, he'd fuck up every time. In the end he just threw a wobbler and said "That's it... I'm going shopping!!" and disappeared from the studio, walked out and went shopping. I remember Elvis Costello disappearing for 'half a day'. Meanwhile we'd tried the problem track a few ways and it started to shape up and I think he was quite pleased with it in the end.

P: I think it can be down to the lack of ability to be objective, wanting something so badly that if it's not working it feels like a disaster. Like the strings for example on our session.

A: Well it is odd. I've used strings quite a lot over the years and if you do strings with a band that hasn't had them before they can suddenly freak out in the mix, you know, so you end up with them quite quiet and it becomes like a texture. So, on this occasion I thought I wouldn't wait to be asked to take the strings down, I'd mix them as a texture and Jet comes in and says "can you turn the strings up"! But I'm glad he did it because it really does work.

P: So why did you get involved this time?

A: I originally got a call from the management and said "I'd love to do it, send me some tapes", and then it all went quiet for about 8 weeks when suddenly I got told you were gigging in Plymouth and all at once I cut short my holiday, saw the show, met the managers, heard some demos and really liked the songs. That was it! I think we've also had a great time making the record don't you think? I mean that's half the thing - to have a good time as well as making a good record.

P: Do you change your approach with different artists and do you change arrangements often, because people expect this from you as a producer?

A: Firstly for us it's horses for courses really, but as far as rearrangement goes, why change a great song? Because you're supposed to? - that's pointless. For example, when we did 'Absolute Beginners' we never touched it. I mean sometimes you're lucky, you get things



Photo: Marian

A: Well, while mixing 'Raven' he called me - We'd worked on his former band Deafschool down at TW - and said "I've found this band 'Madness', will you produce them with me? I said I'd love to and...

P: The rest is history as they say.

A: Yep!

P: How do you guys work then?

A: Well as you know, when we did the album I was in the control room all day at the desk, so when there are two of you you can leave the studio for 10 minutes or just step back. It's quite good for you. Also, we've a good chemistry between us. I mean we've been together 15 years. He's from the musical end of the business, so we're different in that respect.

P: But you must have the same desire when it comes to the sound of the record?

A: Not always, but most of the time, yes. I mean, on occasions I'll be twiddling knobs for an idea and because he doesn't know much about the console, bless him, he'll say "why don't you try such &

have corrected it, but having said that some great records have been made with them.

P: Well I personally found 'in The Night' 'Dynamically Challenged' shall we say, because of machines. For me, natural feel is vital. Part of your gig is getting the best out of musicians, which you do with relative ease, but how many times have you regretted getting involved? Do you get highs and lows etc.?

A: Well I do get the buzzes and downers. If you have a bad day you get really depressed, if something's not working you go home and think "shit, what can I do about it?" The worst thing to do is just work all night - you've got to leave it and come back. As for regrets...I've had a few...but do I have to name names?

P: Well no, no no no no no....yes!

A: laughs

P: No you don't have to name names.

A: Well, mmm...

P: Anyone in particular, lately perhaps?

A: laughs...Aah, there was...no...

laid on a plate like that and other times you are turd polishing.

P: Do you use a special soft tape for that? What do you look for in a band then?

A: Songs.

P: Fine. We've heard a lot about only a handful of 'new bands', although Blur are on their 3rd album, another 7 year overnight success, and I have a lot of time for 'real music', but are these acts the exposed tip of a much bigger iceberg waiting to melt upon us or is it another industry fad? After all, you have a band called 'Bush' currently at No. 24 in the US album charts without a single who most kids know nothing about over here.

A: Well I don't know, it is encouraging but I don't think the English companies have been signing 'real bands' for some years. I mean they've signed a few obviously, but accountants run the companies now and whereas before things like 'Motown' and 'the Beatles' could run alongside each other and still make loads of money, these days they think they have to be fashionable and ignore some of their bread & butter acts. Acts that will always do fairly good business seem to get the boot for some one-off dance thing or something, just because it will take the most money. As far as I'm concerned, get the entrepreneurs & pioneers back running the show. Anyway 'Bush' had to go looking for a US deal.

P: No real commitment, no-one there to put

their hat on something anymore. It certainly confuses me that the Brits award for best album can go to a band whose producer then fails to win 'Best Producer'. It seems to show a profound lack of general sense or even knowledge of the business it represents.

A: I think the Brits system is pretty good really, but I do think Stephen Street should have got 'Best Producer' for his work with Blur and also the Cranberries album.

P: You've won something though, haven't you Al?

A: Yeah, the fucking raffle.

P: What, 'Best Producer' raffle?

A: Me and Clive got nominated twice, but never won. The first time everyone was saying "you've got it" etc. before the ceremony, so they open the envelope, "and the winner is..." well me and Clive are almost out of our seats, and "Trevor Horn" was announced. It was slightly embarrassing at the time. But I won this CD player in the raffle but was too upset to go and get it, so I sent my brother up to get it. I said to him "If I'm not going up to get a Brit I'm certainly not going up to get a fucking raffle prize".

P: Yeah, like "Alan can't be here to receive his prize, he's down the bookies" or something like that!

A: It was a really good one actually. It lasted years.

P: Do you get more afraid of being 'quirky'

as the years go by, like playing safe?

A: Obviously it's great to have a great sounding mix and hear everything, but when things jump out at you etc. it's more exciting. I mean some bands say "oh you know that guitar you've got in the right, can you mix it in the middle a bit more or turn it down a bit", but why? It sounds great over there, it comes out, it's making a statement, you know. You put it in the middle and it's all safe and nice, but, some people can and do get 'safe'.

P: I'm glad you feel that way. I know during the session you were always offering up ideas like that. For me it's always one leg good, two legs bad (take your time) I mean we've got 1.7 seconds of harp right?

A: Yeah, it's not very radical really is it?

P: Well, half a second would be more radical.

A: One note?

P: What about a gap where it would have been? Yeah!

A: What about diddly diddly diddly diddly bum? (intro to 'knock on wood' - Ami Stewart)

P: Aaargh!

Many thanks to Alan for his time and patience and for doing a great job. Thanks also to Lisa at Westside Studios for her tape and help.

Paul Roberts

REVIEWS - Chris Winfield

Well, what a talented lot you are! Not only playing so well but also composing songs. If we could get you all together we would have a day filled with music ranging from an almost folk sound through soft punk to heavy metal. There is so much creativity going on out there and I'm sure that the few bands reviewed so far are only the tip of the mountain. Some bands stand out from the rest and so here are a few more to whet your appetite. Why not try to see some of them and help a fellow STRANGLERS fan to make it in the big bad world of music?

THE SORDID DETAILS Cop-u-later

THE SORDID DETAILS are:- John Spoz vocals/guitar, Pete Spoz vocals/keyboards, Rick Cox drums, Mike Couch vocals/bass.

Although at times there seems to be a fight over who takes precedence (with the vocalist losing out sometimes) this band impress with the sheer energy they put into their performance. The keyboards dominate in "Gooseberry" whereas in "Ignorance is bliss" there is more of a balance between the guitars and the keyboards and vocalist. "I'm cheap" is the track where the vocalist comes into his own with lyrics that reflect the sordid world around us. This is definitely one of those songs that one grows to appreciate as one becomes familiar with it. The final track "One in every crowd" is again full of energy and pace. This band from the West Midlands sound as if they are giving their utmost so why not go and grab some if they are playing near you?

For further details contact:- The Sordid Details, 6 St. Chads Road, Rubery, Birmingham B45 9DJ. 021 453 3504

SENSUCHT Until the next time

SENSUCHT are:- Mathew Stevens vocals/guitar, John Hiles drums/Pete Pocock vocals/bass.

From the Shalford Scout hut in Guildford

comes Sensucht with their punk sound. An insistent bass-line is a feature throughout the tape. There is a distinct resemblance to "Angels with dirty faces" in "Now you're gone". The simplicity of the arrangements and delivery of the lyrics are very reminiscent of some of the best of Punk rock. Though their approach tends to be rooted in the punk era this band concentrates on performing their own compositions rather than merely covering the "golden" oldies.

For further details contact:- Judith Patterson 0483 419347

SILENCE Weird round & square

Silence are :- Robbie Scik vocals/guitars, David Manks lead vocals/bass, Mark Cunningham vocals/drums.

"It's the lost Beatles tapes" was the first thought on hearing this but that would not do the band the justice they deserve. Imagine THE STRANGLERS in a quieter mood as in "Dreamtime" or "In the night" and you might be able to capture the style of music of this band from Yorkshire. It's still rock-'n'-roll but not the Motorhead version. There is a certain "je ne sais quoi" about this band that I found very appealing. They don't shout at you but they are compulsive to listen to. Lyrics that convey a message without preaching mean that the songs quickly become very hummable. The

sound of Silence could be the sound of the charts with the right promotion.

For further details contact:- Mark Cunningham, 5 Horeton House, Avenham Way, Bradford. BD3 0BL 0274 392412.

FANCY Thinking of you

FANCY are:- Alexa Mackenzie vocals/guitars, Hark bass, Ash drums

Fancy have a fresh and deceptively simple style which features Alexa's vocals subtly backed by the instruments. The simplicity of style is enhanced by the clarity of her voice which is reminiscent of Bjork's. This clarity would expose weak lyrics but they pass the test with flying colours. "Ugly faces" begins musically very like "Lost in America" and the sentiments expressed in it would fit in with the rest of Alice Cooper's album whereas "Heartbreaking" is a wistful soul-wrenching song. Fancy were once CLANWILLIAM but are now building their reputation on this easy to listen to style.

For further details contact:- Java management 081 778 5801/ 0892 655 941.

BURNING:PILOTS Greatest hits

BURNING:PILOTS are :- Anthony Farrell

Shades of the music of Arabia can be heard in "Fanatix" the first track on the tape. But don't let that fool you, the tape is a demonstration of the musical talents of Burning:PILOTS that encompasses a range of styles from walking blues through to an almost Hawkwind type of rock music. The main sound is from the keyboards with the lyrics delivered by an almost unearthly voice. If this is the work of only one person it is a tour de force indeed.

For further details Contact :- 15 The Spinnings, Summerseat, Bury, Lancs. BL9 5QL

Note: We now have more demos than we can keep up with, so no more for the time being pleeeeee! - Thanks.

A LONDON WALK PART 2 by John Ellis

The first part of the walk brought us from Chinatown to Somerset House at the top of the Strand. You should now have Lancaster Place on your right and Wellington Str. to your left. On the left hand side of this street you will see the portico of The Lyceum theatre. A band not entirely unknown to readers of this magazine is rumoured to have graced the stage of this establishment some time in the past. Crossing Lancaster Place brings you to the large one way system known as Aldwych. Over on your left you will see the Strand Theatre and as you walk ahead you will pass a row of shops. Watch out for a nondescript Indian Restaurant. This has to be one of the strangest but cheapest places to eat Indian food in London. Moving on you will walk past the entrance to Somerset House which was constructed in 1776 on the site of the 16th century palace of Protector Somerset. The building now contains the National Registry of Births and Deaths. Walking past the entrance to Kings College buildings you will see, in the middle of the road, the church of St Mary Le Strand. Designed in the 18th Century by James Gibbs this is the church of the Women's Royal Naval Service. As you move on notice the entrance to the BBC World Service over on the left.

Take a short detour down Surrey Str. on your right to the sight of the fake Roman baths which were probably built in the 17th century over an old spring. Moving on along the Strand the large building on your left is Australia House and now

that's another story. Still moving on, check out the beautiful entrance to the Twining's Tea offices at 216, the Strand. Another beautiful entrance to a building is a little further on, on the right, at the Law Courts Branch of Lloyds Bank. Moving on past the famous Wig & Pen Club on your right you come to the junction of the Strand and Fleet Street which is marked by the Temple Bar which sits in the middle of the road.

London is, in fact, two separate cities, The City of Westminster and The City of London and Temple Bar is at the junction of the two. This monument occupies the site of the original Temple Bar which was built in 1670 and designed by Wren. There is a plaque showing how the original looked set into one side of the Bar. A large dragon surmounts the top. You know you are entering The City when you pass one of the several ornamental dragons scattered around it's perimeter. Should the reigning monarch wish to enter The City they must stop at Temple Bar and ask permission from the Aldermen of London.

Next on your right you will come to Middle Temple Lane which leads you into The Temple itself. This wonderful part of London really requires a whole article to itself being not only a particularly beautiful place to visit, but also a site of great historical interest. It features often in the works of Dickens and has probably changed very little from the time he was writing about Fountain Court, Pump Court and all the other wonderful nooks and crannies waiting to be discovered. The Temple was originally the English headquarters of the Knights Templars. The Temple Church is from this period and is one of only four round churches in England. The site eventually passed into the hands of the Knights Hospitallers of St John who leased it to a number of lawyers. For this reason the area became one of the Inns of Court and the home of barristers and lawyers.

Exit the temple through Inner Temple Gateway passing under "Prince Henry's Room", a half timbered building erected in the early part of the 17th Century. Turn right into Fleet Str. and you will be almost on top of Ye Old Cock Tavern. About this time the old plates of meat will be getting a bit weary and you might be tempted to enter for a bit of light refreshment but resist, for better things are just around the corner! Cross the road and you will come to the remains of the Gatehouse to the old Clifford Inn, another of the ancient Inns of Court. Moving on you will come the church of St Dunstan in the West which was rebuilt between 1831 and 1833. Notice the clock made in 1671 and rescued from the church which originally stood on this site. Carry on to the corner of Fetter Lane, named from the fewters (beggars) who lurked there. Directly opposite you will see two more entrances into The Temple at Serjeants Inn and Mitre Court.

Next comes Dr Johnson's Court. This is one of a number of small alleyways and courts running off Fleet Str. that are worth investigating. This particular one will lead you to Dr Johnson's House. Johnson (1709-1784) is apparently the most quoted Englishman after Shakespeare and is buried in Westminster Abbey. Move on a few yards along Fleet Str. and turn left into Wine Office Court. A small door on the right will bring you into the welcoming domain of Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, definitely THE place to have that well deserved refreshment. The small bar on the immediate right of the entrance hall is one of my favourite places in London. Staggering out into the daylight of Fleet Str. walk on a little way and you will find yourself outside the old offices of the Daily Telegraph. This beautiful Art Deco building, erected in 1930, with it's famous clock is one of a number of ghostly sites that were once at the epicentre of the British newspaper

industry. As a small boy I remember being taken on a school trip to see how newspapers were made. New technology has meant the newspaper industry is now dispersed across the country. Moving on you will come to the offices of the Daily Express which tell a similar story.

Cross the road and you will come to the offices of Reuters. Now move on and on the right you will come to the little street which leads to the church of St Bride. This Wren church was originally built in 1680 although much of it was destroyed by German bombs. Because of it's location it became known as the parish church of the Press. It is most famous for it's steeple from which wedding cakes take their three tier design. Originally 234 feet high, it was struck by lightning in 1764 the damage made it advisable to reduce it's height by 8 feet. Moving on you will now pass two interesting boozers, The Old Bell built in 1670 and the Punch Tavern (built near to the site of the old Punch paper offices) with it's beautifully tiled entrance. Now walk on and you will come to the big intersection known as Ludgate Circus. If you look to your left across the street you will see a memorial to the thriller writer Edgar Wallace set into the wall.

As you cross Ludgate Circus and head up Ludgate Hill towards St Paul's Cathedral look to your right. There at the end of New Bridge Str you will see Blackfriars Bridge. This takes it's name from the monastery of the Dominicans or Black Friars established by Hubert De Burgh, Earl of Kent, in 1221 which was located near this site. Incidentally, Ludgate Circus takes it's name from King Lud, the legendary founder of London.

Now cross the Hill and notice a plaque commemorating the site of the publishers of the Daily Courant, the first London daily newspaper first published in 1702. A few more yards up the Hill you will come to the corner of Limeburner Str. Look back towards Fleet Str. for an excellent view of St Bride's steeple. Next on the left as you move on you will come to Old Bailey. A few yards down this street will bring you to the Central Criminal Court surmounted by the famous blindfolded statue of Justice. This recent building stands on the site of the notorious Newgate Prison, often mentioned in Dickens. For nearly 100 years executions took place in the street outside the prison, the last one being that of the Fenian Michael Barret on 26 May 1868. Returning to Ludgate Hill and moving on you will notice many small streets descriptive of the activities that took place in the area. It's not surprising to find Ave Maria Lane, Pilgrim Str. and Creed Lane in the vicinity of London's Cathedral and an ancient monastery site. Opposite Old Bailey you will find Pageant Master's Court and a bit of exploration on this side of Ludgate Hill will lead to some interesting buildings and alleyways too numerous to mention here.

Proceeding along the North side of the Hill you will next come to the church of St Martin Within Ludgate. There was a church on this site in the 12th Century. It was rebuilt in 1437 and destroyed in the Great Fire and then rebuilt by Wren in 1684. This church contains some wonderful Victorian stained glass and carved woodwork by Grinling Gibbons all of which survived WW2 bombings. Now we proceed up the Hill to St Paul's Cathedral and the end of our walk. Rather than give you a potted history of this building I hope you won't be too tired to go in and find out for yourself. It's the same story for many of the places you will have passed on this journey. The churches in particular will reward closer observation and The Temple could occupy several hours of your time.

If you are interested in things Japanese there is an excellent Japanese bookshop (Nippon Books) in St Paul's Churchyard. Just past this shop you will find the entrance to St Paul's Underground station. If you do this walk I know you will find it rewarding and I may even meet you on it myself! Happy walking.



you are at the junction where the Aldwych completes it's arc. Looking ahead and to your left you will see the church of St Clement Danes which sits on a traffic island accompanied by three statues. The church is known from the nursery rhyme which says "Oranges and Lemons say the Bells of St Clements". It was originally built in the 9th century by the Danish community in London and rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren in the 1680s. It was rebuilt once more after being virtually destroyed by bombs during World War 2. It is now the memorial church of the Royal Air Force. At the front of the church you will find a statue of Gladstone designed by Hamo Thornycroft. The statue behind and left of this is of Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris, Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command 1942-1945. The other statue is of Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding who was Commander-in-Chief of Royal Air Force Fighter Command 1936-1940. Walk around to the back of the church and you will find a statue of Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784).

Moving on past the church you cannot fail to see, on the left, the imposing edifice of the Royal Courts of Justice. The front entrance to this building is often seen as a backdrop to press interviews with various individuals and groups. These are Victorian buildings designed in the Gothic style by G E Street and completed in 1882. Members of the public are allowed in and it's well worth a visit. I was there myself to unsuccessfully appeal against eviction from my home as a result of the notorious M11 Motorway scheme. But

When a band is as diverse and interesting in character and output as the Stranglers, it's certainly no surprise that they attract a large number of equally diverse and interesting followers, the Stranglers and SIS were sad to learn a couple of months back that we'd lost one of the most colourful characters from the ranks of Stranglers enthusiasts. Here follows a brief tribute, requested by JJ and myself to Julian Skelton. Thanks to Shaggy and Su, and our best to all Jools' family and friends.

Marian



On the 20th January 1995 Jools was playing in panto as Bashful in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in Sheffield. When finishing that night's show he was taken to hospital where he fell into a coma. Eight weeks later on 13th March 1995 he died in his mothers arms at the age of 26, never coming out of the coma. On 20th March 1995 he was laid to rest.

Jools was the best friend anyone could have had, no matter who you were or what walk of life you came from, never having a bad word about anybody. In all the years we had known him he had never lost his temper and always saw everybody's point of view, that is why he was so special to everyone he knew, to us he was a part of the family.

The Stranglers were the cream of the crop - he was so looking forward to their new album. Many a night we would stay up just listening to their music or watching the videos. Coming back from seeing the band he wouldn't stop talking all the way home and even the next day, all about the songs the band played, what they were wearing, how they played this or how they did that. JJ was his hero he even had a tattoo done of him on his chest, and Jools would write to him asking for his advice on all different matters.

Thank you Stranglers for the many happy years Jools spent watching and listening to you and all the pleasure you gave him. Thank you M. at SIS for the support you gave and the flowers you sent.

To have known him and loved him, then to have lost him is better than not knowing him at all. Thank you Jools for all the memories - you will always be in hearts.

Thank you, Shaggy and Su, Sheffield

Tim Bruce in

T-REXTASY



In the last decade there have been a spate of tribute bands - The Bootleg Beatles, the Australian Doors, the Counterfeit Stones; even the Stranglers have a tribute band - "Elastica" I believe they're called - However, before I talk myself into a law suit, please do not ignore T. Rextasy.

I first came across T. Rextasy and the unbelievable image of their lead guitarist & singer DanielZ when a friend and I supported them at the Borderline on the anniversary of Marc Bolan's sad demise. Strangely enough, the Stranglers connection arose again. T. Rextasy's bass player Paul came over to me and said "are you Tim Bruce, the guy who played drums for the Stranglers at Fontwell Park?" It transpired that he's not only a fan but a member of SIS. So after a brief telephone conversation with out Marian she agreed to the following interview with DanielZ.

T: Well I guess the first question is 'why Marc Bolan? Why T. Rextasy?'

D: Well Marc has been a major influence on my life since being a teenager. I was just so bored with people like the Beatles and the Stones and the Who, - who I admire and love now but at the time, when I was a kid, that was the older generation's music, so when I heard this strange vocal coming out of the radio one day - it was Jeepster, that was the first T. Rex song I ever heard - I just found it so different. His vocal and his guitar style were different from anybody else; all that wrapped up with a great production by Tony Visconti just made it unique. T. Rex were the first band to influence my life and I followed them right the way through to the present day. Marc was a very special person, a unique song writer, a poet, very good looking for a man, very androgynous - not many people look like that today. I think today there is a lack of stars, everyone looks the same, no one has any individuality, and I think the T. Rextasy thing was a progression. The reason I started T. Rextasy was there were so many second rate tribute bands coming onto the scene; I liken it to the punk scene really when you got the high class punk/new wave bands - the Stranglers were one of them, the Sex Pistols, The Damned, The Clash, The Vibrators - all those bands, and of course you got all the awful bands like the Fruit Eating Bears and Eater and all the sort of cheapo bands which I suppose were fun at the time but you realise don't really belong in the scene or the history of rock. It's the same kind of thing in the tribute scene - at the moment it's getting really stale because there are too many people that are just jumping on stage with a guitar saying 'I can do that, let's go and play Who numbers, let's go and play Beatles tunes' and making a complete mockery of the whole thing. I think music is an art form and I've spent a long and hard time

perfecting the vocals, perfecting the image, perfecting the guitar style, because the guitar style is very much underrated and I think that Marc was a very good guitar player and I strive to prove that point especially in my performance.

T: Does it take a long time to get the sound? It's likely that you're spending a lot more time on the sounds for live work, aiming more for the records than perhaps Marc did when he played live; because he'd done the records he could make changes to his live performances. Are you aiming for the records or a 'live performance' or the best of both?

D: Yeah, that's exactly it, 'a bit of both'. I'll give you an example. When I do a track like 'Get It On', that track is approximately four minutes long, but live, Marc used to play ten, fifteen minute versions of the song. What we do is we basically play the recorded version and then we add in the live version and we sort of intersperse the two and mix them up so you get a live version of the recorded tune. I think that's important because it gives an exciting blend to the performance.

T: But it's actually quite difficult when you start doing a cover and you decide to do the cover as close as possible to the original - you find you're actually spending a lot more time putting it together than if you were rehearsing and performing your own tunes.

D: Yeah, well, we haven't got the license to really change things that drastically because people won't like it too much; I mean I don't consider ourselves a retro band, although we do gigs with Slade and Sweet and people like that, but we do a lot of our own headline gigs where we sell out venues now and we've got our own fan base, and some of the people, ironically, aren't Marc Bolan fans. We've got quite a few 18 and 19 years olds that are T. Rextasy fans because they've heard tracks of T. Rex and for whatever the reason they're not keen on them. But they like the way we play them because, in their opinion, we're a band of today and we play the songs like they were written for 1995 as opposed to the early '70s, which is important because if you take any artist, say Jimi Hendrix or Jim Morrison for that matter, they're packaged now as though they're a major artists of today - if they were still packaged for the early '70s or late '60s I don't think they'd get that fan base. So I think it's important to bring it all up to date and that's what we do and we try to merge the two. In the band I've got a

very elaborate rhythm guitarist who looks like he's in a band of today and I think it really important because I want the teenagers as well as the older generation. We attract everyone, we're not aiming for a certain age group. I think if you do that you're limiting your audience.

T: I was thinking about songs Marc Bolan had written. A jeans ad. just recently features 20th Century Boy, which is certainly one of my favourite songs by him, but it's like, say, The Kinks' 'You Really Got Me' in the sense that from the opening chords it has you, it's immediate. I love the power chord opening, but Marc Bolan didn't just write straight rock tunes, there were a lot of boogie, 12 bar feels in his music now that go right back.

D: Oh, definitely, his musical influences really cover people like Bessie Smith to Eddie Cochran, Bill Haley, Little Richard, those kind of people, but he was a great fan of early black blues and that really comes out in songs like 'I Love To Boogie' which was a complete rip-off of a very old song called 'Teenage Boogie' by Webb Pearce. I think that was released in the early '50s; Jeepster was a Howling Wolf song which I think was called 'You're So Fine' or 'You'll Be Mine', I can't remember now, but his genius was to take a song and twist it around a bit and make it his own.

T: I did want to discuss your stage show because you don't just go out and play the music, you actually become T. Rex, especially yourself because you actually do look quite a lot like Marc Bolan and I'm sure a lot of people must have said this to you already; but do you have to get the clothes made up specially or are you able to buy this stuff, er, off the peg?

D: Well some of the clothes are replicas of Marc's stage gear and other things aren't., but I was lucky for a short period, - good or bad, the '70s fashion did have a revival for about 5 minutes and I was able to re-stock on my satin jackets and feather boas and stuff. I do have, er, batwings that he used to wear.

T: Batwings?

D: Yeah, batwings. It was basically a couple of pieces of satin material sewn in such a way onto a waistcoat...it looks quite spectacular on stage, a sort of fluffy waistcoat that he used to wear in the mid '70s, so I do get things made.

T: So there's a lot of expense doing this sort of thing properly?

D: Yeah. I've got exactly the same model amplification he used to use.

T: And guitars?

D: The guitar is not exactly the same model, but it is a Cherry Red Les Paul like he used on tour in 1977.

T: I thought that was a gold top under the lights.

D: No, he didn't play a gold top, he used to play a white Fender Strat, which is quite well known with a sort of emblem on it (laughs). I have the same and a really early or late '50s Les Paul wood finish.

T: He actually toured with the Damned didn't he?

D: No, the Damned toured with him (laughs).

T: Opps! Well, I meant to put it that way round, but he was quite into touring with a, then, up and coming band like the Damned.

D: Yeah, that's what made me a little annoyed about some of the die hard T. Rex fans because they refuse even to buy CDs, which is a bit sad I think, only because they want to live in the past. I think it's a bit of a shame, because if they really wanted to follow Marc they'd go forward and be in 1995, because that's the time we're living in now; you can't live in the past and basically Marc always drove forward, he never looked back. That's the reason he took the Damned under his wing - he said 'let's go out - the punk thing is now. I don't want to tour with some '70s band I want to tour with a band of now' and he toured with the Damned. With us, we don't have that kind of push - to say we're not going to tour with '70s bands, because when we play with Slade or The Sweet or Mud they still pull in about a thousand plus.

Now whether you like those bands or not doesn't come into it, what matters is who's going to see you on stage. Now we can go out and play in front of a thousand plus or we can say no, we're not going to play with those kinds of bands, but why not play in front of everyone - that's us. But Marc was obviously an original. We, I suppose, are the T. Rex experience but at the end of the day everyone will call us a tribute band, but I don't really mind.

T: Does it bother you in any way that there is a 'shelf life' to what you're doing?

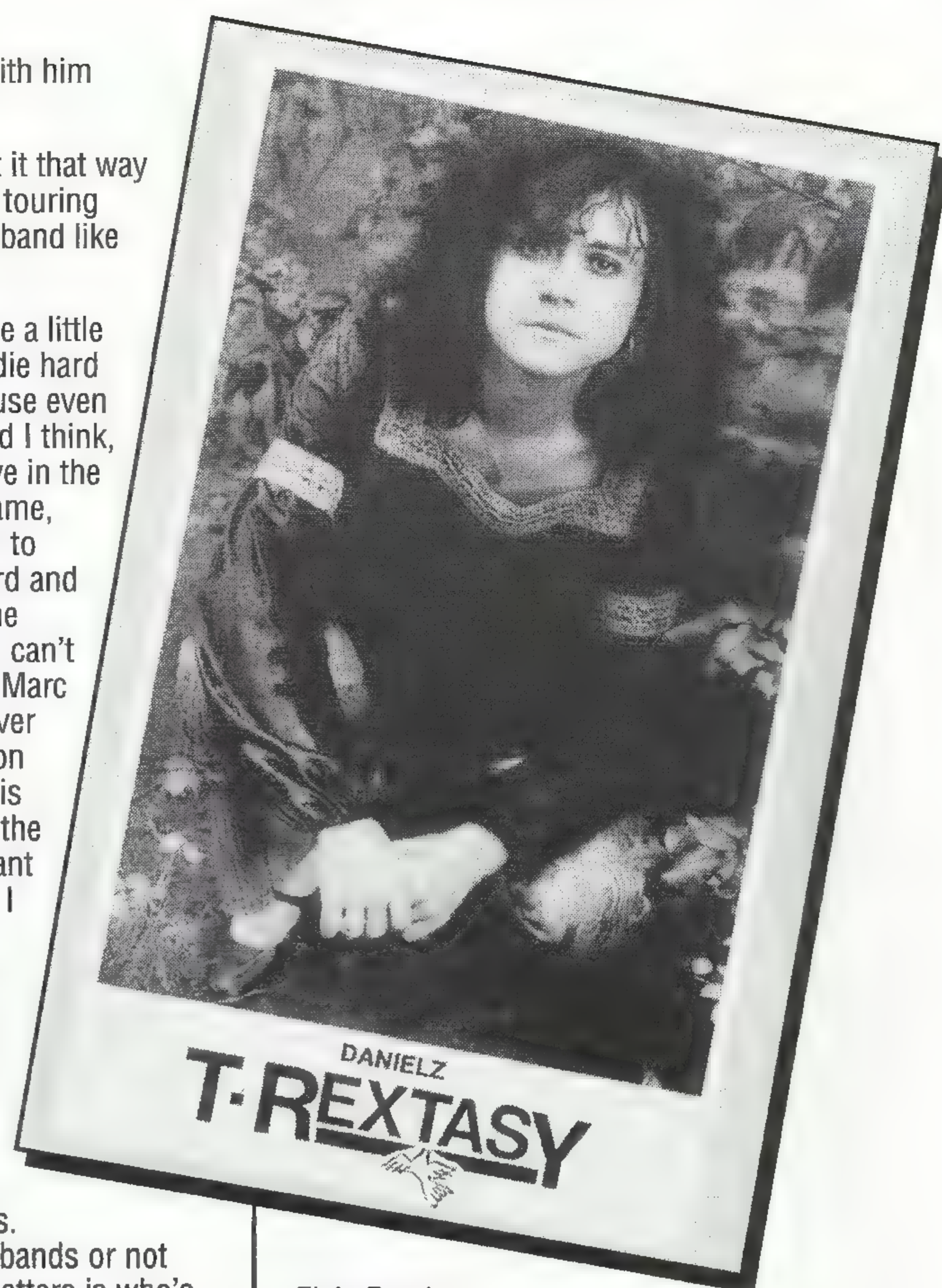
D: Yeah, kind of. I would have said that perhaps if I hadn't seen Slade going around with different band members, if I didn't see Sweet going around with just one original member in the band. Mud has only one original member. Slade have two but Noddy Holder and Jim Lee are not with them.

T: Noddy not with Slade? You can't have Slade without him!

D: But we're going out on tour in Germany with Slade and they're pulling 10,000 people a gig - they're Gary Glitter quality in Germany. In England they're pulling about a thousand plus but when we play with then in Germany they pull arena size audiences still because they've got an album deal out there but they call themselves Slade II...but you talk about shelf life, we've just got ourselves an album deal and it's coming out in April, and there are two original songs, my songs, on the album, so where does it end?

T: Have you written the two original songs in the 'style' of Marc Bolan?

D: No, I've always written songs, but there is always a bit of Bolan in me, there has to be because I've been a fan for so long. Although saying that, for those who may read this, I'm not one of those people who is obsessive about it him; to the lengths of



Elvis Presley fanaticism - I think that's a bit unhealthy.

I would also like to mention Paul because I don't think we'd have done this interview without his (SIS) connection. Paul is a big fan of Marc Bolan and a big fan of the Stranglers - they're his two favourite bands.

T: I think we should say that Paul is your bass player.

D: Yes, Paul is our bass player and a very competent bass player indeed - so thanks Paul!!

T. Rextasy CONCERT DATES

May

5 The Marquee, London (supported by Tim Bruce's band 'Jazz For Money')
20 Army & Navy, Chelmsford
26 Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth

June

9 Thamesmead University, Ealing
10 The Robin, Brierly Hill
16 The Woodman, Sidcup, Kent
23 The Standard, Walthamstow

July

1 The Wheatsheaf, Stoke on Trent
14 The Swan, Fulham

August

4 Wedgewood Rooms, Portsmouth

September

8 Oval Rock House, Norwich
9 Oliver Twist, Colchester
30 The Embassy, Skegness

October

1 The Anvil, Basingstoke

"And now, we'll hand you back to the Studio..."

"So how's the recording session going then guys?"

"Oh, really well"

"So, what's the gossip then?"

"Oh, not much, y'know - just work work work and early to bed with a mug of cocoa and the Readers's Digest"

Hmmm. Sorry, but that really didn't wash. This is rock n' roll after all - there had to be some juicy bits of information, or at least a slightly less vague account of the nasence of 'About Time' to be had for reporting back to you, the esteemed readership of Strangled, so Trevor Dawkins, the band's Production Manager and part time SIS mole (who just happened to be 'in the Stranglers' service' for the purpose of, well, to the band's knowledge anyway, setting up and monitoring the performance of the instruments and technological doo-dahs during the sessions - ha! we fooled 'em) was duly assigned the task of spilling a bean or two. Over to you Dawky...

M.

It rains a lot in Monmouth - for weeks at a time in fact, which is a shame when those weeks just happened to coincide with the period that the Stranglers intended recording a new album at Rockfield Studios, just outside Monmouth.

The work brief from Messrs. Willcox and Long had been concise, yet strangely detailed - "Just keep 'em happy" said Sil, shortly before I found myself sat behind the wheel of a seven and a half ton truck, full of the band's equipment, aquaplaning in a most unpredictable fashion on the western reaches of the M4. 'Wintry showers' the radio said, and I can only think that this slight understatement was broadcast by the Government to stop an uncontrollable panic in the local population. Thirty minutes later



Ooh Dawky - you pin-up you. TD shortly before performing major TV surgery. Plymouth '94 (see 'About Time' interview)

my suspicions were confirmed when I found the truck axle-deep in the fast-flowing flood water as the Wye river tried to win back as much as possible of the Valley that had been reclaimed in the last five hundred years in one, all out, overnight attempt!

Rockfield Studios stands on the side of a gently shelving valley a few (nautical) miles from Monmouth, and is a legend in the realms of residential studios, being the oldest in the world and having been run by the eccentric Kingsley, his wife Anne and their family for the last thirty years. It's an inspiring place - a working farm that would equally be as suited for a holiday destination as a work place. (It would be an excellent water sports centre....).

By Monday morning I had all the equipment more or less in position in what was to be its home for the next couple of weeks and once Alan (Winstanley) had agreed with the intended drum booth, using a series of very intense and traditional methods of running around, shouting, clapping, screaming and generally getting himself in a bit of a state - all in order to assess the acoustics of different rooms (that's what *he* said anyway), Jet and myself spent a few hours erecting his kit.

By this time the others had arrived, and after one of the fiercest and bloodiest battles I have ever witnessed between members of a supposedly professional unit, the bedrooms were allocated. After a brief familiarisation programme with the studio complex (bedrooms, studio, kitchen, pub?) everyone was champing at the bit to get into the studio and run through a few numbers, giving the band a chance to make sure all the equipment was OK and also allowing Alan and Simon (Alan's assistant and a producer in his own right) the luxury of finding their way around the control room. Everybody seemed to be happy, which was a weight off my mind, so it was time for (from a calorie point of view) the Dinner from Hell. It has to be said that the food throughout our stay at Rockfield was incredible, and I was soon wondering how easy it was going to be for me to put on an extra four stones in the next few days. I think everyone was probably thinking the same thing, because the conversation steered itself towards fitness and it wasn't long before Paul and I made a solemn and unbreakable pledge to undertake the sort of backbreaking fitness regime - jogging,

cycling, swimming etc - that would put a Special Services marine to shame. I was amazed that I managed to keep it up for so long (!) stretching it out until I crumbled magnificently upon discovering some chocolate in the fridge about twenty minutes after finishing dinner. Paul was a changed man though, and still insists that he lasted right through the night (or at least 'til he got to the pub).

The beauty of being in a residential studio is that everything (and everybody) is to hand, which makes for a very easy going session. The guys are hardly the most difficult and demanding band that I have ever worked for, and so once I had powered up the gear in the mornings and changed the strings on the guitars and basses - they have a nasty



Getting sultry with Sil - post-gig, Heineken Festival, Plymouth '94

habit of getting dirty and sounding dull; not what you're looking for when recording - it was very much a case of just going with the flow. I would normally compile a shopping list of anything that the chaps wanted and pop into town in the afternoon for a daily dose of reality! It was at this time that I started realize what Jekyll and Hyde characters the guys really were. Who can honestly say that they have seen Paul Roberts without his daily fix of American hard gums, seen Jet Black reduced to tears through a lack of Maltesers, seen JJ driven beserk with a craving for the Daily Mail crossword? I have, and I can tell you it's not a pretty sight, but then again I guess we all have our moments don't we?

Unfortunately, due to prior bookings at the studio we found out that we weren't going to be able to stay at Rockfield for as long as was necessary for all the recording to be done, so it was decided that we would go into Alan's studio (Westside, Shepherds Bush) for a week to finish it. It was with a certain amount of sadness (probably brought about by a total lack of dry socks) that I found myself packing the gear away a lot sooner than I or the band really wanted to. Privett (sound guy extraordinaire, also windows cleaned) arrived with the truck and so with teardrops (read 'raindrops') in our eyes we set sail for west London.

By this stage there wasn't really that much left to record, apart from the vocals and various keyboard bits. I was amazed at the rate at which the chaps were working - it was certainly some of the fastest recording I had ever witnessed.

The week at Westside flew by. I think that was probably more to do with spending a couple of hours fighting your way into London in the morning and another couple at night getting home, rather than sheer volume of work, and for once I found myself

a little jealous of the band members who live in London.

The food was great again and I was quite glad to find out that we would have to move studios once more in order to go residential (Alan thought it better that everyone could be around all the time whilst mixing, as this would probably save a lot of time). Hopefully the food at the next studio wouldn't be that good and my waistline and rising cholesterol level might be in with a chance!

Yet another road trip, this time to Parr Street Studios in Liverpool, although this time I managed to get all the gear we needed into a transit van (as the recording was virtually finished we only needed to take enough bits and pieces to do any patching up, if required).

Mixing is probably as hard or harder than the original recording process, and it takes a very level headed and tactful producer to steer his way through what can often be a veritable minefield of tortured artistry and egos whilst dealing avec l'artistes. Invariably the drummer always thinks the drums need to come up, the bass player feels a need for the bass to be pushed up "just a bit", the guitarist knows he will pine away and die at the thought of having to listen to his most favourite guitar lick buried beneath a wall of cheesy organ (?!), the vocalist can't explain it, but he knows the vocals should be well above anything else and the keyboard player still "can't hear the fuckin' piano...!" Not like *our* boys of course, oh no...

Alan was quite amazing to watch, spending all day setting up a mix, playing it a few times to the chaps, listening to their respective 'constructive' comments, and then with a little bit of fader, a bit of twisty knob there, a splash more reverb and hey presto! - everybody's happy. Even when his ears threatened to let him down, due to a cold, he persevered. John went to a Chinese herbalist and came back with a tailor-made cure. All Alan had to do was take about 72 of these little black pills (that looked suspiciously "like rat shit" as Dave put it) four times a day. The look on his face as he suffered for his art made us all realize what a professional the man really was.

There was also an unforgettable session where Nigel Kennedy came up to Parr Street to play violin on one of the tracks (The Face). An avid Stranglers fan for many years he said that to play on a Stranglers album was realizing one of his greatest ambitions! He only took about 45 minutes to record some of the most amazing violin I've ever heard. It was decided that we'd go out for a meal that night (the food wasn't that great at the studio and we were all starting to feel a touch undernourished) and although the conversation at the Chinese was limited strictly to Aston Villa and old violins it was still a great night (or seemed to be once the saki-induced temporary amnesia wore off).

A few more days back down at Alan's studio (yes, the food really was that bad in Liverpool) just to finish off a couple of the mixes, and that was it. All over too soon.

I must say that having looked after a few bands in studios, it was an absolute pleasure to have worked for the Stranglers in this capacity - almost a holiday in fact! Anyway, thanks for the work lads - more please!

Trevor D.

THE STRANGLERS AND FRIENDS: LIVE IN CONCERT

Receiver Records: RRCD 195

TRACKS:

INTRO
GRIP
HANGING AROUND TANK
THREATENED
TOILER/
THE RAVEN
DEAD LOSS ANGELES
NICE 'N' SLEAZY
NUBILES
PEACHES
BEARCAGE
DUCHESS
HEROES
5 MINUTES
SOMETHING BETTER CHANGE
SEWER



Friday 17 March 1995. A telephone conversation between Marian and Dave H turns to the subject of the above release. Marian suggests a review and comparison with 'And Then They Were Three...' for Strangled might be a good idea. No problem. A quick call to JP who promptly arranges to visit HMV to buy the thing. And so it is that we are ensconced in JP's bedroom on a bleak and cold Sunday evening trying to put something together (OO-ER!).

At first our task seemed a simple one. To compare the better packaged and FAR better quality official release with the shoddy bootleg version ('And Then They Were Three..' Reviewed in the letters page of Strangled 42). However, on comparison things started to get a little more complicated.

The first thing that hits you is the cover (and boy does it hit you!). Maybe there is a problem with reproducing the Stranglers logo, but this doesn't even closely resemble the real thing. What you actually get is a garish red thing that looks like a refugee from a 70s glam rock compilation. (What next, Jet Glitter, Dave Stardust????). However, the back cover does include a nearly full list of all the guests who took part in the gig.

And so to the music. It is immediately clear that the sound quality on 'And Friends' is far superior to that on the bootleg. But as always, there is a price to pay. Starting with the (edited) intro by Jet, we are soon into 'Grip' with Hazel O'Connor on vocals. The out-of-tune sax, clearly audible on the bootleg has been completely mixed out. Perhaps no bad thing, but there will be some listeners (including the reviewers!) who will object to the original sound of the gig being tampered with. Through 'Hanging Around' and into 'Tank' with Peter Hammil's vocals - sadly missing on the bootleg are restored to their full splendour. We are soon into 'Toiler' which sounds as though it is about to die a death during the intro before recovering in time for the vocals to start. It is interesting to note that the bootleg does not suffer from the same problem.

All the percussion work which made the bootleg version of 'Nice 'n' Sleazy' such a delight has been completely removed from the official release. For us, this is one of the major disappointments. The other disappointments? Well, you may know that the track 'Ice' is listed on the bootleg as 'Curfew', which is fairly typical of bootleggers. Not to worry, as Receiver have remedied this particular problem - They've left the bloody track off altogether!!! In fact, they've also omitted 'Shah Shah...', 'Do the European', 'Go Buddy Go' and most of the between song chat. Clearly a case of "Let's cut it down so it fits onto a single CD", which really does the fans no favours at all.

The views of the band and SIS on the subject of bootlegs are well documented. But here is a case where fans are being offered an official release which, while much better quality, is incomplete. Faced with the choice, fans will undoubtedly plump for the flawed but complete bootleg, while others will feel compelled to shell out twice, to complete their collections. It seems a pity that a little more care was not taken and a properly packaged double CD (possibly bolstered with other tracks) issued instead which would have pleased most people. It would also have ensured that all royalties went to the band and not to the 'fat cat' bootleggers.

On packaging, the bootleg - with colour photos and proper logo - wins hands down. On content, the choice is yours. The complete gig in lesser sound quality, or most of the gig in blinding quality?

JOHN P & DAVE H (BOTH IN BLACK)

At last! An easy assignment for **Strangled** – simply review the new album – what could be simpler? Good title too – perfect for reviewers – ‘About Time they did another album’ or ‘About Time they called it a day’, the choice is yours. So without further ado let’s see what I’ve let myself in for. I wonder how many people get to review something that over 95% of the readers are actually going to buy?

Right, tape in, switch on, oh fuck, what’s this? This sounds like Motorhead, but wait... those vocals sound familiar ...**GOLDEN BOY** kicks off the album; a brand new song and this one is going to be a stormer live, probably the heaviest track since ‘5 Minutes’ back in 1978. The band have also done a video of this track for TV promotion. The second track, **MONEY** is more familiar, having been showcased several times last year. Another up-tempo number with some great harmonies, I first heard this track live in Cardiff last year and it really stood out then.

Track 3 is **FACE** and we’re starting to slow down a little (knew they wouldn’t be able to keep it up after all these years!). This song is notable for a fine electric violin solo by special guest star Nigel Kennedy. I can now knowledgably write this after saying to Paul that John’s guitar work sounded really good – I’m sorry, call me a Philistine but I still can’t tell the difference – difference in sound that is, I *do* know the difference between a guitar and a violin. Track number 4 is sinister. It is also *called* **SINISTER**. Probably my favourite track on the album – this sounded superb live last year and I think that it works better live with the lights and atmosphere, but what a song! Lovely deep cello on the intro (okay, I thought it was a double bass), screaming guitar and pounding bass and drums. A gothic masterpiece – I

can just see the video now, starring your editor first thing in the morning (unpaid reviewers can write what they like). (Yes, and they can also be maimed in strange and interesting ways, so don’t push your luck. – Ed.) **LITTLE BLUE LIES** comes up next. Slightly more standard fair in my opinion, but there you go, you can’t love everything and like Quality Street every one is someone’s favourite – the coffee cream of the album. We are now about half way through the CD or just about to turn over the tape, so let’s listen to a bit of classical music while we wait. Of course, being the Stranglers we don’t even need to change albums – **STILL LIFE** gives us a glorious

the Stranglers

ABOUT TIME

Album review by Nik Yeomans

minute and a half of string quartet before the bass comes in the carry the song on. Okay, John does come in after about a minute, but it’s so subtle that you’d hardly notice, alright?! The strings worked so well at Shepherd’s Bush Empire live that they were immediately incorporated into the final version. The SIS Bodysearch video bears witness to this.

Dave cranks up the church organ for **PARADISE ROW** written to mourn the passing of John Ellis’s home and many others to make way for the M11 link road,

of those D. Greenfield patented arpeggios hidden in this one, as borrowed by Elastica. At this juncture I’m going to stick my neck out and say that **LIES AND DECEPTION** is the ‘massive hit waiting to happen’. ‘Golden Brown’ was one that happened and ‘Always The Sun’ was one that didn’t – let’s hope someone spots this and plays it to *death*. This song is so catchy it will drive you mad with some lovely acoustic work from JE to boot – your mother will love it.

Next up is **LUCKY FINGER** – the Camelot theme tune just waiting to happen – no doubt everyone will think this is all about the old lottery but no, listen to Uncle Nik, there were demos of this song long before some silly bastard reckoned his life had been ‘ruined’ by winning £17 million (allegedly). Still, I wouldn’t mind finding out. Personally I think that the lucky finger in question is the one David Elleray pointed at the penalty spot twice to cheat Chelsea out of last season’s FA Cup final, but like the Murphy’s, I’m not bitter.

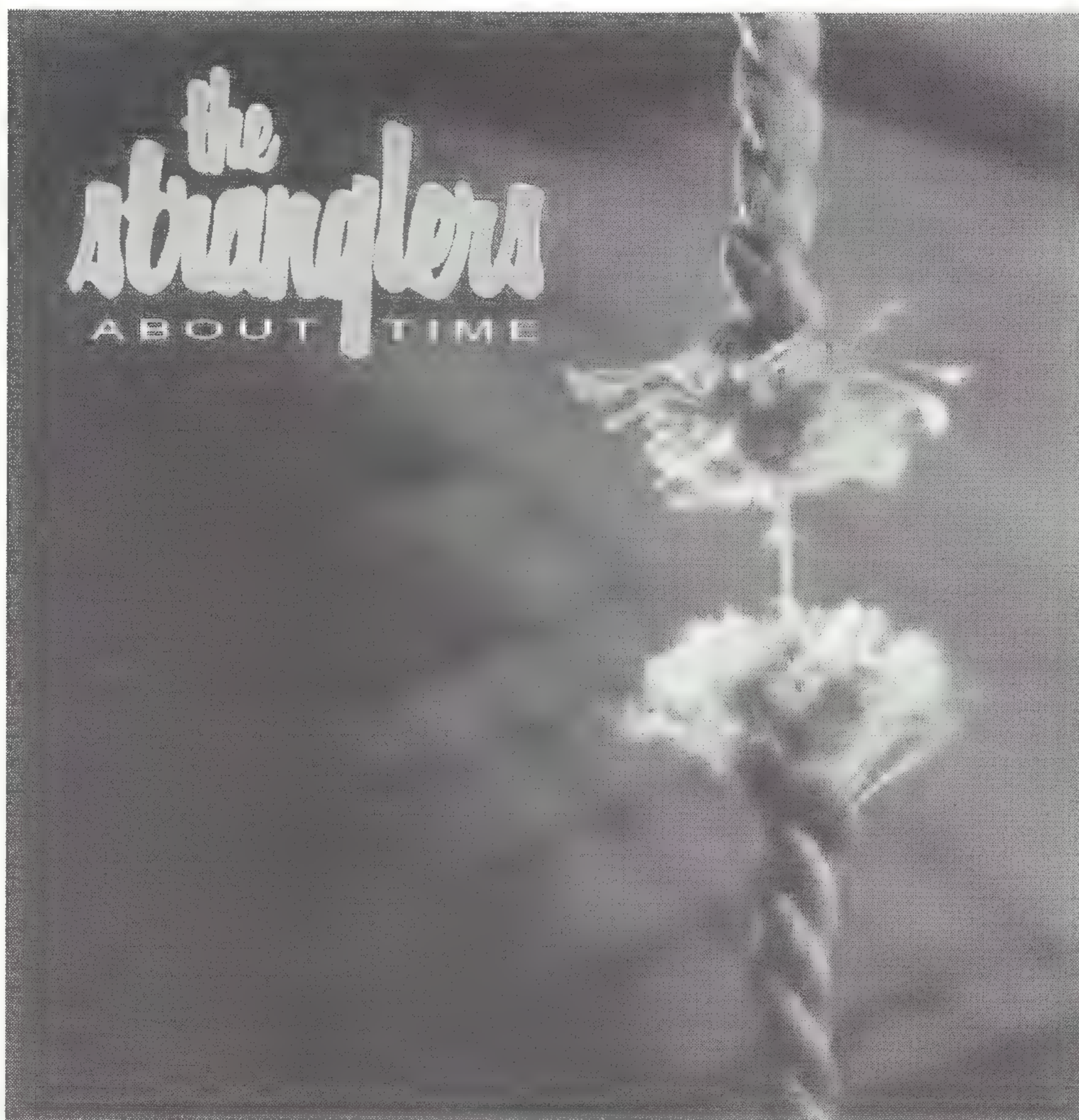
The album ends with the wonderful airy **AND THE BOAT SAILS BY** taking you away

on a trip to wherever. I’ve already volunteered to appear in the video when it’s filmed in the Caribbean aboard a luxury liner and yes, two lucky *Strangled* readers could be going with me. All you need to do is to be young, female and preferably blind and stupid.

So there it is. It’s taken nearly three years, although the recording process itself was all done quickly. Several songs have also ‘disappeared’ along the way such as ‘Mumble Jumble’, ‘This (God) Is Mine’ and my own favourite ‘Cool Danny’, although hopefully tapes can be traced for future SIS releases if they are not used elsewhere. (*I’m hoping, I’m hoping* – Ed.) I’m afraid I can’t comment on the sleeve as at time of writing I have yet to see it, but the CD itself would convert into rather a nice clock if by some miracle you don’t like it. No doubt we’ll

have to suffer all the ‘it doesn’t sound like the Stranglers’ reviews, but then again, when have the Stranglers *ever* sounded like the Stranglers?. All in all a fine album, and if I’m not mistaken one of the best. It feels like a real team effort with at least four of the band supplying lyrics. I did have a little whinge that there were only eleven tracks, but was quickly told that the running time is almost 45 minutes, thus making it the second longest running studio album after ‘In The Night’ and yes, I’m afraid that does mean that I’ve timed them all to find out. Enjoy the album – I did.

Nik



although call me an optimist or call me a wanker (and I *have* been called both) it is going to make getting to the SIS office a hell of a lot easier. Still, at least they’ll think twice before they can start any more roads won’t they?, but I digress, this is a really strong song with a powerful performance from Paul. The real Paradise Row was called Colville Road – R.I.P.

Remember that great wah wah sound on ‘Never See’ from the ‘In The Night’ album? Like it? I did and it’s back in **SHE GAVE IT ALL** on the new album from the Stranglers. (I’m sure there was a career waiting for me in advertising somewhere). There’s also one

Three years and seven issues of Strangled down the line it is once again time to turn our thoughts to all things album-related (as well as a few other currently contentious topics), and round up the five protagonists for an in-depth chewing the fat session as the time to herald the approach of a new release beckons anew. So there we all were, seated around SIS's vast mahogany boardroom table - Actually, this isn't entirely true on two counts - firstly, SIS's 'boardroom table' is really a slightly the-worse-for-wear, 'best that MFI can provide' desk, and secondly, you'd have more chance of finding a pork chop in a synagogue than successfully rounding up all five band members together and then getting equally full and frank answers to questions from all of them. Therefore, each Strangler was grilled separately at Chateau Roberts/Greenfield Villas and on the set of the 'Golden Boy' video shoot respectively. I think that this has resulted in the most honest and spontaneous interview possible, without any band member feeling at risk of being whacked over the head by one or more of his colleagues, should they disagree with his opinions (not that a Strangler would ever resort to mindless violence anyway of course...) or being distracted by one of the others building playing card towers while waiting for their turn to answer. No thoughtful chin rubbing and nods of agreement to avoid giving their own individual answers either. So now you've been briefed on the plot, read on...

M: Having heard and become familiar with so much new material via the live performances over the past few years, it is understandable that the fans were feeling more than a little frustrated at not being able to take the songs home and keep them all for their very own. Were the band feeling a similar frustration as time went on in wanting to actually get songs committed to tape and released - a bit like being on the starting blocks with someone holding your ankle?

JJ: (peremptorily) Yes.

M: In a word!

JJ: I don't think the next one will take so long. We can't take anything for granted, but I'd really like to do another one in 18 months

bit of a rush when it happened - we were literally told two or three days in advance. I think Trevor (Long) phoned up and said "stand by for rehearsals on Thursday & Friday and hold Saturday and Sunday because you might be recording on Monday"! or something like that.

JB: I suppose yes and no really - you always want to get it recorded, but at the same time you always want to get it right before you record it - as you know, we worked on it for almost 12 months and we just knew we had to get it right so yes, there was some anxiousness but out of the stuff we were doing live we were only doing 6 numbers from the album, so although we'd played them a few times live and they were ready to go there were a lot of others that weren't, and it took a while to get them into shape.

JE: I think there was some frustration - When you play something live for a real long time you start to dream about its potential on record and I'm really pleased it's done now. The thing is that now it's done that particular ghost has been exorcised and we're keen to get on with the next one.

PR: Last year we were doing all those weekend festivals and things which were really good, but there came a point when I think we just wanted to record the album. That's my personal opinion, we were starting to feel jaded because we weren't actually putting it down.

M: So the fans were thinking "I want to take this stuff home" and you were thinking "yeah, and we want you to buy it and take it home so that I can go and buy more M&S salads" (Paul's chosen lunchtime fare that day)

P: Yeah, new clothes and stuff and sweets. I just want to do another album now.

good as the others, so we'll have to rethink that at some point.

M: What is strange this time around is that there exists almost a 'ghost album that never was' - a whole host of tracks that have been introduced to the fans live over the past few years, and that they've become very familiar with, but yet have never been recorded, let alone made it onto this album - 'Shattered', 'Candy' 'Bed Of Nails' 'This God Is Mine' - the list seems endless. Is it the end of the line for all these tracks, and do you think that there's a risk that good songs may be cast by the wayside, merely because between record deals you've become bored with them before they had a chance to be recorded commercially?

JB: I personally would like to think we'll put them behind us because if we find ourselves having to dip into them it may mean we've run out of ideas I think, but there are certainly some good songs there that may be resurrected and used at some point, although we haven't got any definite plans in that direction at the moment. We decided last year when we went into rehearsals that we had so many new ideas we ought to work on those, and I think that the short list was picked almost exclusively from those. We were coming out with so many new ideas that it seemed the right thing to do, to carry on



with those new ideas.

JJ: I always prefer no looking back which is tough on some of the songs. At some point we have to exercise discretion in choosing which ones go on and which ones are dumped.

M: I know that the absence of '(This) God (Is Mine)' will break a few hearts.

JJ: Yes, and at the moment the only place that appears is on SIS's Fontwell video.

(Nice plug JJ - you'd never guess he was an SIS Director wouldya?)

PR: The others may re-emerge in the future, but it all depends on how we continue really, in what vein. I myself always like to look forward and write new stuff, I don't really care about what's been written in the past and it's not good enough to sit back and rely upon something that you wrote two years ago

JE: If we were asked to do a new album tomorrow I think we'd have enough material with stuff left off of 'In The Night' and this album which is still strong material. Things

M: I know that you were in the fortunate position of having more than enough material for this album to choose from. Were you happy with the final choice of tracks for inclusion?

DG: Well the choice was democratic. We made a list of all the numbers we had and we all ticked twelve and there were half that everyone voted for. There were three that had five ticks and three that had three, so we just chose the ones that most people had voted for - the five of us and Alan. We dropped one of them shortly into the recording because it wasn't sounding as

or so.

DG: Well, we were all getting fed up with just rehearsing non-stop. We've got enough material for at least one other album I think. It was all a

don't get left off an album because they're not good, but because they may not fit in with the rest of the tracks on the album, or because it doesn't fulfil the particular job that we're trying to do with that album, e.g., 'Mumble Jumble' is a good example, as well as the others you mentioned, and there are several other songs which we've never played live but have rehearsed that didn't make it onto this album. I don't think you can ever say 'forget that and move on' - a good song is a good song and it's a shame to waste it.

Hmm. I think we could have an inter-band debate on our hands at some future date on this one. So, moving on...

M: *I know that you've adopted a slightly different approach to the recording process with*

DG: For the last 2 or 3 albums at least the approach was you write a song roughly, put it down and you don't know 100% how you're going to play it, but you just add bits in the studio, you come to record it and then you have to go and learn it. I much prefer the approach on this one - it's more 'live'

M: *Would you say, then, that there's*

Discuss the New Arrival - Marian Shepherd

this album, or rather a return to an earlier way of working - could you enlighten us and expand on this?

PR: Basically, this time we were determined, and we made an agreement last year, that we would actually work as a unit of musicians rather than a unit of technicians. I can't work with machines personally, I can only write with machines. I can't stand the emptiness there is with a machine, so yeah, I'm happier this way. Also I think the tendency with machines is that you tend to correct something that you did, even if it was actually better left as is - for example, half a bar was dropped somewhere from the intro to 'Sewer' and that's the way it stayed, for the better.

M: *I do think that it's the idiosyncracies that make many songs - Many recordings seem to have suffered badly from over-production.*

PR: Of course. But then there is a place for machines, don't get me wrong. Just not for me personally. I don't mind using a sequencer here and there for something special, but we're in a band and we should be making music with the instruments we've got - y'know the Stranglers were originally a rock & roll band and they got into it because they played musical instruments and wrote songs, so it only stands to reason that they should continue to do that. You really notice from 'Folie' onwards when they really started to use machines. For example, on 'Nice In Nice' there's only one feel the whole way through. I don't think it can ever emulate the feel of a live performance.

an optimum point when it comes to the usefulness of machines and after that they begin to use you rather than you using them?

DG: Yes, it has been used too much. Using effects and things is OK but we were using computers for a lot of the keyboards apart from grand piano and the Hammonds - it was all played into the computer and then we adjusted it around and the computer played the machine when we came to record it. Boring really.

M: Not very satisfying in terms of musicianship I'd imagine?

DG: No, not at all.

JJ: I'm *much* happier with this approach. I think we went as far as we could with technology and it didn't serve us very well in the long term, so I think we've returned to a much more enjoyable and productive way of rehearsing, playing them live and then recording them. It makes more sense economically and artistically it's a zillion miles away from previously - it's much more creative because you go into the studio with the ideas virtually complete apart from a few tweaks here and there, but basically the idea is complete as a song, whereas before you abused the technology - you went into the studio with a half-finished idea, you spent months and months changing it and then reassessing it and then changing it again and in the end you started chasing your tail.

JB: Well, making an album to me is just 'making an album' - we've always tended to find at the end of the day when you're in the studio you end up doing it not quite the way you did it last time, so there's always a little bit of change and I don't really distinguish between making one and album and another in the technical sense.

M: *So for you it's just a means to an end?*

JB: Yeah, it's just that this time there was a willingness and a keenness to rehearse everything which we haven't done before because some of the band had got fed up with rehearsing or hadn't got the patience

for it. Over recent years, as you know, there has been a tendency towards using computers a) because it was new technology and b) because if you haven't got a song rehearsed the only way to do it in the studio is to use computers because you can then go back and change things that you would have already have sorted out, had you rehearsed it, y'know what I mean? If you haven't rehearsed your ideas before you go into a studio it costs a lot of money, and you have to be very rich people to have the time to make the songs up while actually in the studio, and we're not in that league.

JE: I think the sophistication lies in the arrangements, so we asked Alan not to over-produce it. - even though it sounds very well produced we wanted to go for a live feel, and I think that's what has been achieved on this album.

M: *Do you feel in retrospect, then, that the production on 'In The Night' was a little OTT?*

JE: In retrospect most of us feel that we'd like to get that album and re-do it. We might even do it live one day and record it. Yes, we should have approached it with much more of a live feel.

M: *I have to admit that in comparison with the demos for 'In The Night', which really appealed to me, the edges did seem to have been smoothed off a little when it came to the finished product. Were you a little despondent about the performance of 'In The Night' commercially?*

PR: I just think it's like with anything - if you let other people influence what you think then of course you're going to be disappointed. I just don't think that the then-management did the right thing, I don't think the record company gave too much of a shit about it, and inevitably you have to pay for those things. It wasn't entirely down to marketing, but that did play a large part. I don't think it was bad songwise, but just in the way it was put together - the way it was put on tape was all wrong. We spent too long, let the producer have too much of a say in it. We were kicking arse live but it just wasn't right when recorded. I don't think China gave a fuck - those kind of record companies appear to care but they don't.

M: *But would you put it down to a lack of caring or perhaps pure incompetence or a lack of vision when it came to the Stranglers - a lack of empathy with what you are about and the best way to*

promote you?

PR: Well, how many times have you heard "this is fantastic, this is amazing, this is gonna be a big hit", and then when it fails to do half a million in the first week, suddenly you don't even get a "hello" out of them. We did sell enough copies for it to be a hit, but it took three weeks instead of one day.

M: I know you're all pretty chuffed to working with your old mucker Alan Winstanley again - does it make a big difference to the whole experience when you're working with someone who knows you (and who you know right back!) so well?

JB: Well I have to say that it does count for a lot. When you go into a studio and you know the people you're working with it does have a different effect on you than when you encounter someone you've never worked with before. You don't know whether it's going to work out or not and there's some doubt in your mind about how it's going to end up, so that doubt element wasn't a factor in this case, as we knew Alan so well.

M: So there was a mutual respect?

JB: Yeah, it went very smoothly. He knew the quirkiness that's always existed in the band towards the approach to making records.

M: When I spoke to him after the Plymouth gig last year he was really fired up and enthusiastic about the demos he'd heard and the gig that day. I would think it's a real compliment that he's as excited by what you're doing now as he ever was, despite being so close to the original line-up - Psychologically it must feel like a particularly encouraging 'endorsement'.

PR: Totally. Everyone here has so much respect for Alan. It was fascinating for me to talk to him about his earlier history with the band. He's produced some of my favourite songs over the last 20 years, and has worked with some of my favourite artists. He was great to work with.

JE: He recorded the live Euroband stuff and as a result of that he recorded Rapid Eye

Movement, so my first solo single, the live version of 'Babies In Jars' was recorded by Alan. I think he had the right kind of personality for the Stranglers really.

M: Considering his past record he certainly has an amazing lack of pretension.

JJ: He's just typical of the 'Stranglers school of personalities'. He actually asked to come on board with this one, we didn't have to ask him so it's really reassuring - a bloke with his CV coming to a few gigs and saying "yeah, this is happening".

M: With many albums produced by bands themselves, how essential in your view is the role of the producer?

JE: Well I think there are two reasons why the Stranglers need a producer. One is that we're all busy, especially if you're going to try and lay down tracks live. That means there is no-one in the control room with an objective ear about whether a take is a good or bad one, therefore you need a producer for that and secondly, the Stranglers are five guys that come together and agree on a lot of things, but there are always going to be two or three points on which we disagree, whether to have a solo keyboard section, more bass, whatever - several places where we can't always come to a final decision ourselves, and that's another role that the producer can play. I also think that it's the role of the producer to retain the overall vision of the project where the band can disappear up its own arsehole sometimes - sometimes you need to be pulled back a bit and have someone to keep a guiding eye on the proceedings.

M: So the producer needs to be a bit of a mediator at times - understandable I suppose, when you consider that the album is one 'baby' shared between five - there's bound to be the odd occasion when you can become a bit over-protective or, dare I say it, 'precious' if you're not careful, when in the midst of a

particularly heavy recording session.

JE: Right.. Also, the producer will keep the project within the budget, where we might start coming up with ideas which are wildly over-budget. I think at the end of the day we could have produced it ourselves and come up with a pretty good album - in a sense we've almost co-produced it - but it's wise to have a producer and I'm really pleased with the job Alan's done.

M: This release also sees the Stranglers' debut with Castle Communications as the new record company. How have relations been so far - happy? confident? productive?...

JJ: Definitely yeah, so far so good. They're talking my kind of language and not hiding behind some obscure sort of marketing bullshit. They definitely have a vision and seem to be showing the same vision as our management and ourselves. They're not accountants either.

M: Thankfully - that's a situation that can't do anything but stifle creativity. (For 'stifle' read 'pound the living shit out of..')

DG: Personally speaking, it's fine as far as I can see, although you never know until you actually see results.

JB: Well at this stage in the game we're very impressed by what they're doing and we hope and assume that it's all going to continue like that. I was very impressed by the fact that there are people there that know more about us than we do!

PR: It's kind of difficult to tell this early on, just because I've met so many people in the music business that come across in a similar way. I've found everyone where we are now to be nice but not overly nice, which I quite like. These people haven't given me the dictionary of bullshit, and I like that. I haven't got so strung out about every aspect with this release, I've been quite happy to concentrate on the songwriting and playing, and let others get on with their jobs. I don't think that you should be a jack of all trades, and I'd much rather be master of singing and songwriting rather than trying to tell everyone how the



artwork should be, how the photos should be, etc. I'm not overly confident about the album, simply because there's so much of me in it that I don't want to have any expectations which can then lead to disappointment, but having said that I can sit down and listen to the album and enjoy it - I haven't become fed up with it, and most people when they've recorded an album just don't want to listen to it any more. I really like the album and I'd have liked 'In The Night' a whole lot more if it had been produced like this.

JE: I'm happy with Castle, but also because we've now got Sil and Trevor. It's the new management's first recording project, and we're all very confident in their ability and I think we've put a whole lot of crap behind us that was a result of the last set-up. We're all very confident about everyone around us now on the business side - that takes an awful lot of weight off your shoulders. If you're worrying about the people around you and whether or not they might be screwing up you can't get on with your job properly, so we all have total faith in Sil and Trevor as our management, and the record company, our agent and all the people around us. We know that we've got the best possible team working on our behalf, and that's a great feeling.

M: *It's certainly been evident that there has been a more 'structured' approach to the countdown to release date with this album., more of a game-plan. I have to say that it all seemed a bit hit or miss with the previous release, a bit untogether, and a few of us were a more than a little concerned at the time. I'd like to talk now about the content of the album itself, the themes and overall feeling dominating 'About Time'. In terms of subject matter, the Stranglers still seem a little perturbed, disillusioned with the world. In truth, I certainly can't find dispute with any of the sentiments expressed, but just to play devil's advocate (or to put it plainly, because I love being a bit of a wind-up merchant!) do the Stranglers see themselves as bitter and twisted old buggers, or a healthily cynical band?*

PR: Well, not being an older man I can't answer that one. Perhaps I'm a bitter and twisted young bugger! I'll tell you what 'Money's' about for example - there's nothing cynical about it. It's about a woman who won the biggest damages ever for being paralysed from the neck down in a car accident and she just turned to these journalists who thought it was like a teddybears' picnic and said "but I'd much rather have your lives than my money". 'Sinister' on the other hand is about heroin (which 'Golden Brown', most certainly and definitely wasn't, Strangled must emphasise here...ahem).

M: *Oh, I'd originally taken that as meaning that 'money talks, money walks, is alive..' etc.*

PR: Yes, I can see how it could be taken that way. It's actually a very positive song along the lines of 'you don't need money' rather than 'I hate you because you've got some'. I've lived long enough without any to know it's not the be all and end all. I personally don't need excessive money - I do need my health, and that's what the song's about.

M: *How about 'Golden Boy' - I wondered if it was about you on first glance, because myself and various SIS associates have been (affectionately, honest - OK, well perhaps just a tad tongue-in-cheek) referring to you as 'Golden Child' for years.*

PR: It's about people that no-one is particularly interested in until they gain a bit of status for one reason or another and then

everybody wants to touch them. It's a good observation.

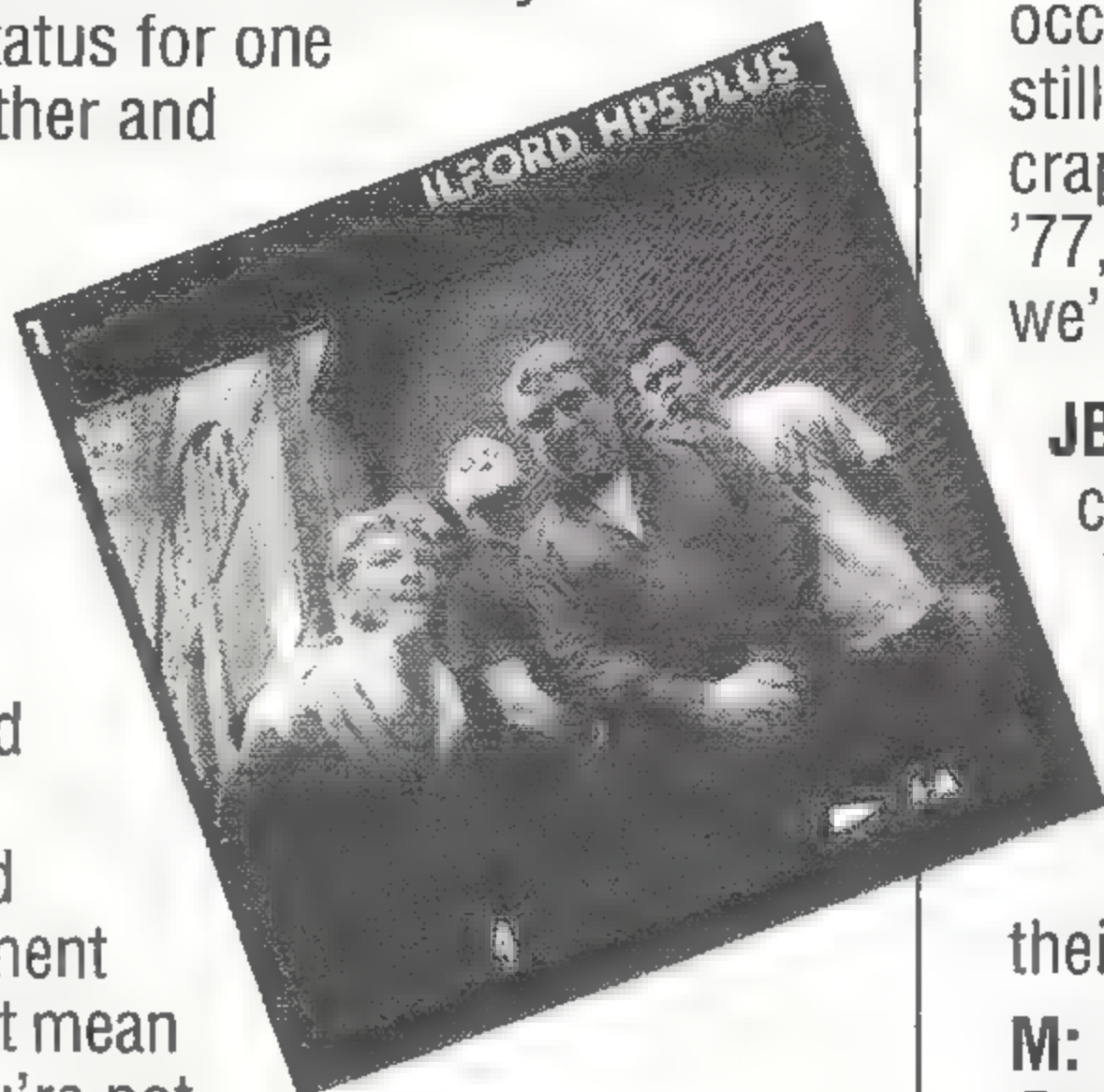
JE: In many ways the world is incredibly fucked up, and why not comment on it? It doesn't mean to say that you're not an optimist. I enjoy being a cynic and will defend it to the hilt, because I think that cynics are basically optimists who every day are simply disappointed by the real state of the world and therefore they use cynicism almost as an alternative sense of humour to deal with that disappointment and the world is full of shit - it's full of a lot of nice things as well, but as a songwriter why shouldn't you want to talk about the shit side as well as the good side?

M: *Well I can't disagree with that. I certainly don't consider myself a total doom merchant or ambulance chaser, just because I'd feel nauseous on a lyrical diet consisting entirely of hearts and bunnies.*

PR: Shit. - but that's what our next album was going to be about!

M: *So tell me about 'Paradise Row' John. I know it relates to the blitzing of your street for the M11 link...*

JE: After I wrote 'Paradise Row' I found out that there actually was one - a row of graded buildings right next to Bethnal Green tube station. Anyway, the real Paradise Row on which the song is based is obviously Colville Road where I used to live in Leyton. The whole thing is specifically commenting about the M11 link road, but is also a general comment about things such as the animal protests at Brightlingsea - ordinary people who are absolutely sick and tired of being shat on by this particular administration are going to grow and grow and all the laws in the world aren't going to stop them finally getting up and saying "we've had enough, this is wrong". Look what happened to the poll tax - shoved right down the tubes by people getting off their arses and saying "this is outrageous" and with the M11 link road protest it started with 5 or 6 of us getting together in a little church hall and saying "what can we do about this?" and look what happened next - 4-5 years later it's literally international news. It's really great to see people taking an interest in their environment and saying enough is enough. 'Little Blue Lies' runs along those lines - It's the second of the 'Mr. Big' trilogy (part I featuring on 'Strangled From Birth and Beyond') so the third one might be on the next album when he eventually gets his come-uppence!



JJ: We've always been accused of being cynical, but it's more romantic I think - when you occasionally get disappointed by things - you have a romantic idea of how the world should be, and when you get let down by people or institutions or situations that don't live up to that romantic ideal you do get a bit saddened. A lot of the songs are actually very positive, but there are occasionally bitter sweet moments. You can still be positive even though you see all the crap around you, which takes us back to '77, but I'm not about to get despondent - we're not writing suicide music.

JB: With 'Lies and Deception', that's not a cynical generalisation. It's a true story. There is some angst on the album about certain things in British Society at the moment. 'Paradise Row' for instance - I mean I'm not anti road-building, but I'm very anti chucking people out of their houses to build roads.

M: *I was going to ask you about 'Lies & Deception'. Am I right in saying that it's the first wholly Jet Black penned contribution on an album?*

JB: Well, it's the first song that has appeared on a Stranglers album that has been totally mine, the lyrics included.

M: *It's very Golden Brown-esque in feel, as well as the fact of its being a waltz there's that same hypnotic mellow feel to it...*

JB: Son of 'Golden Brown'!

M: *Yes, 'Son Of Golden Brown'! - what a great quote! You should have put that in parentheses as subtitle! Was it written recently or had it been bubbling away under the surface for a while?*

JB: It was written around six months ago.

M: *Are there any tracks on this album that you feel will work particularly well live, and, conversely, are there any that you feel are best left in recorded form only and wouldn't work too well in a live capacity?*

JJ: No, for the first time since Rattus - because even with No More Heroes there were a couple of tracks that we didn't really play live - we can play every single track from this album live and probably will.

DG: The only one that I'm not totally sure about live is 'Lies & Deception'. It won't be quite so interesting for me because the keyboard bits were easy. I've always been the same - I enjoy things live that are harder to play - on some things you've just got to stand there holding chords which is boring.

PR: I really like doing 'Paradise Row' live. 'Sinister' I really get off on, and I'm also really looking forward to doing 'Golden Boy' live.

M: *Were there any times that you can recall in the studio when things just weren't working on any particular track, and you had to walk away and leave it for a while or trash it totally?*

PR: The string section on 'Still Life' just wasn't sounding as we'd have liked, until Jet suggested pushing the strings up in the mix, and then it worked.

JB: There was one song which we didn't end up recording but was on the short-list right up until the last minute - 'When Reason Sleeps'

M: *My particular favourite from the demo*

- sob!

JB: We thought that one was going to be a real hot spot on the album, but at the last minute it was decided that it wasn't coming together quickly enough, whereas all the songs that made it onto the album were, at that point, coming together well, and so in that sense yeah, that definitely didn't work out in the end.

M: (tearfully) *Have you binned it or do you want to give it another go?*

JB: Yeah, we all liked it - I think we'll have another go at that one day.

(Pause for author, now much consoled, to blow nose and recover composure)

M: *Steering briefly away from the album, there can be no denying that the Stranglers have been treated, if that's the word, to more press coverage and namechecks than they've had in some while, almost totally in connection with the great 'Elastica nicked a riff' debate. Are the Stranglers pleased with the publicity, or, justifiably perhaps, a bit miffed that after several recent years of sell-out live gigs and dynamic new material they weren't given the coverage on their own merits?...*

DG: As far as Elastica themselves go, it's a compliment isn't it really? And they're a nice bunch of people. As for the press (wearily) I'm used to them, especially the music press - you know what I think about them!

PR: Well it is nice to see a positive press, certainly. Although there was this one absolute tosser of a journalist who said instead of calling in the 'heavies', the men in suits - which we didn't do, - they (the Stranglers) should feel honoured, think themselves lucky that a band like Elastica should want to copy them. Now the Stranglers came on the scene over 18 years before Elastica and the only reason bands like Elastica exist is because of the Stranglers and Wire and anyone else who's influenced them, and further, the only reason that the Stranglers exist is because of bands that went before them, the only reason the Rolling Stones exist was because of R&B and so on, it's a fantastic never ending cycle of popular culture and music.

M: *The irony is that Elastica are admitting that openly and have no problem with it.*

PR: Yeah, and that journalist is a twat, and an arsehole and not worth the space I'm giving him, but he said that with a band 'as cool as Elastica stealing a few seconds of one of the Stranglers songs - the Stranglers should think themselves lucky', but as I've said, without a band as cool as the Stranglers a band as cool as Elastica wouldn't exist, so in trying to deride the Stranglers he's actually complimenting them but he doesn't realize it because he's obviously not that intelligent and also he missed the fact that 40 pages earlier and in every interview she's done lately Justine has said time and again that we're mates. We met each other long before they had a No. 1 album, and long before our publishers took any action.

M: *And regarding that, let's face it, publishers are always going to protect*

the rights that they've paid you for - it's out of your hands when the rights to one of your songs belong to them.

JJ: Nice girls, Elastica, and the drummer's lovely! I love it when lots of other bands who don't worry about the problems of peer group pressure telling them not to cite us as an influence are actually citing us as an influence. That's cool, that's respectful and they've got more courage than some from our generation of people. They're upfront about it. Yes, it pisses me off that in this instance we're not being mentioned for ourselves alone, but I'm not about to get bitter and twisted about it.

M: *There certainly do seem to be more and more bands 'coming out'*

JJ: Yes! Coming out!

M: Coming out of the closet..

JJ: Like Peter Tatchell!

M: *Returning to 'About Time', I hear that Nigel Kennedy was pulled in for active service - how did all that come about?*

PR: We were playing football and we didn't have anyone who supported Aston Villa to play with us. We thought it'd be a great idea and apparently, according to Jet, he was always willing to do something with the band - he's a fan and that's why he did it because he doesn't usually go and do this sort of thing willy nilly, and he came down to the studio while we were working in Monmouth, so we invited him in to look around. We'd left a few messages with him to tell him that if he wanted to do anything with us we had a song that'd be

ideal, that is 'The Face'. So he sat down, had a listen and at the end got up and said "I really love it" and shook our hands. Originally he was going to do it in London but he couldn't make it, so he came up to Liverpool when we were at Parr Street - Aston Villa had just won 7-1, so he was in a great

mood and it was all hugs and he

brought all these AV posters up with him. He came in, and had written a lovely little tune for it, and he did it in two takes. The first time around he played it slightly out of time and Alan said "oh yeah that's fine" and then looked around at us slowly in the control room, and I think I spoke first and said "it's a little bit out of time", and Alan said "yeah, it's a bit out of time, but who's going to tell him?!" We've got this virtuoso in after all, but I'm sure he'd hate to be surrounded by yes men. He was amazing - he's only warming up and he's coming out with concert performance quality stuff. He did three acoustic parts and one electric part as a solo and I just thought it was fantastic and blew me away. But he was brilliant and then we went out and stuffed our faces and drank 12 bottles of saki and he was more disgusting than we were in his vocal approach to the evening.

M: *I hear that Rockfield was a pretty good place to be - do you feel that an ambient setting is essential as an aid to the creative process (or is that just a bullshit euphemism for blagging a nice place to crash for a week or two?)*

DG: It's built around a farmhouse, just down the road from Monmouth. There are a couple of nice pubs around there.

PR: Yeah - what a great place - 23 pubs in one small area! But of course (*desperately trying to sound sincere*) we went to bed early and got up early and worked very hard - actually the last bit's true - we did work very hard.

DG: It is relaxing after a session in the studio - you haven't got any hassles and you can walk straight through to the accommodation. The food was really good, pity we couldn't have done the whole album there.

JE: Beautiful environment, lovely people. it certainly helps you to relax. Rockfield's in the middle of the countryside and to wake up in the morning and literally raise your head from the pillow and look across at rolling fields is a fantastic start to the day. Obviously the studio itself is really important, but I do believe that the environment actually does help to add to the creative process - some fantastic albums have come out of that place.

JJ: It doesn't really matter to me, so long as I've got a nice room to go back to.

JB: I think it helps, yes. You don't need the luxuries but you do need a bit of isolation because it's very easy to get distracted if you're in the midst of lots of other things going on, and Rockfield isn't luxurious but it is very isolated and it's nice to walk out of the studio door and there's nothing there to break your train of concentration.

M: *I know that there can often be long inactive gaps between each of you doing your respective musical bits in the studio (stop me if I'm getting too technical!). What do you get up to to keep you from going out of your heads with boredom? (behave yourselves at the back there).*

JB: Well I actually like to spend quite a lot of time in the studio falling asleep.

M: *No, not mere 'falling asleep', what you mean is 'recharging your creative batteries' surely?!*

JB: Yes, that's right!. If you're not actually involved in what's going down at the moment you are falling asleep out of physical boredom, but you're not actually totally bored. You're actually absorbing what's going on and although you might be half dozing you are taking in mentally what's happening and I actually enjoy that part of the process. If I go away and read or watch TV I find myself getting bored and I want to go back and continue to hear how the thing's progressing.

M: *I suppose it may distract you from keeping your mind focused.*

JB: Yes, absolutely, so I spend a lot of time in the studio.

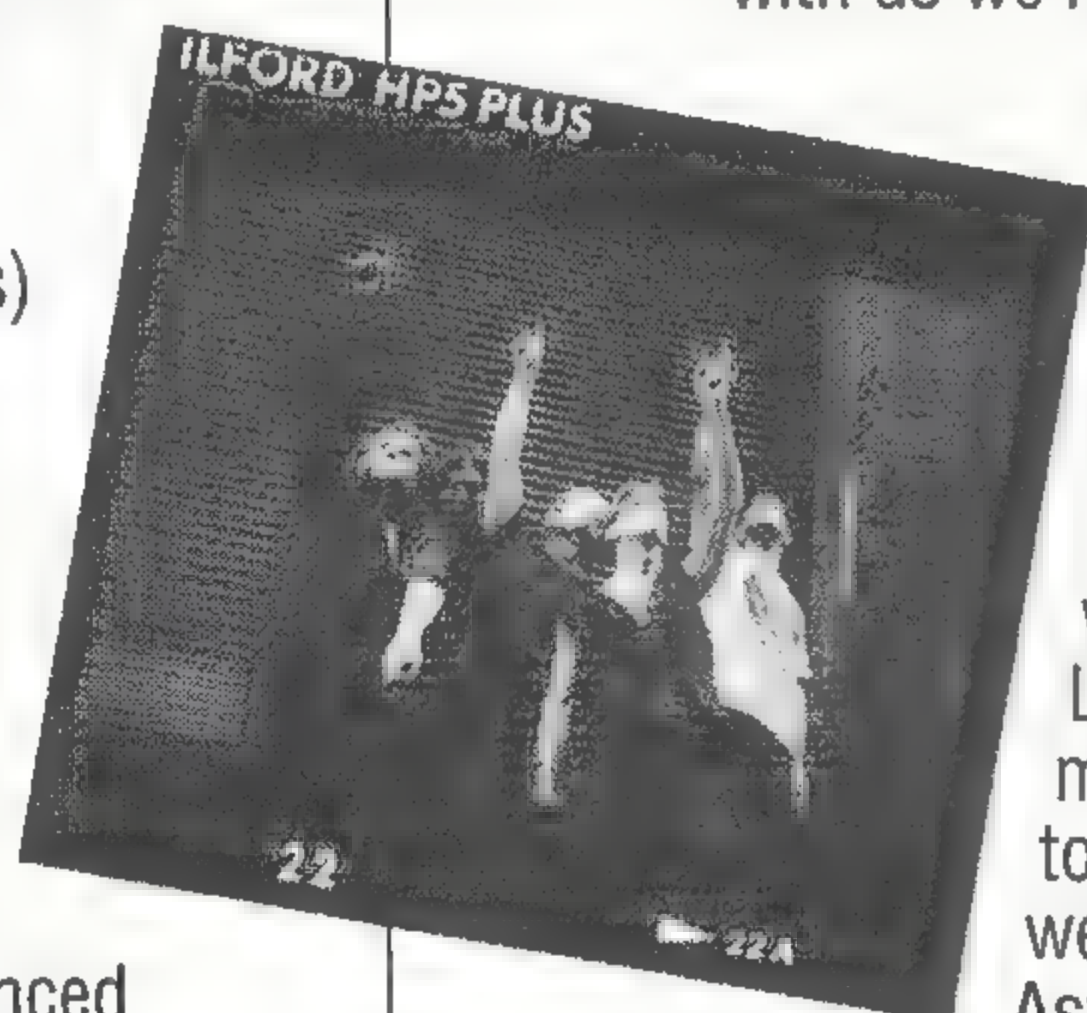
M: *Is that when more ideas might be triggered off to enhance things further?*

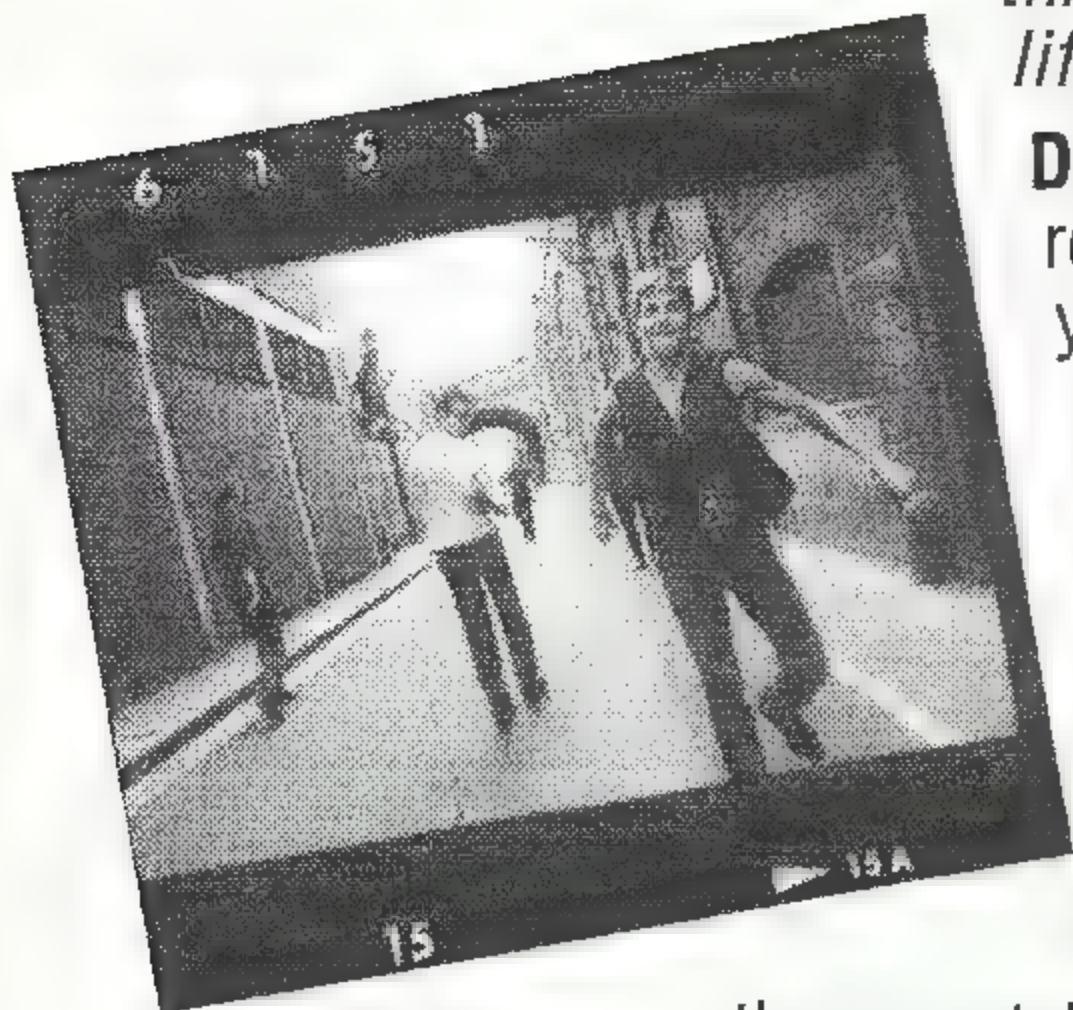
JB: It is indeed, because y'know a record's never finished 'til it's finished.

M: *So how do you conquer the tedium Dave? Don't tell me - puzzle books!*

DG: Yes, books and puzzle books, and at Parr Street I was busy recataloguing my videos on the Psion, which gave me something to do.

M: (thinks) *My mother warned me about*





this sex and drugs lifestyle...

DG: After the initial recording when you all go in and put down the rough tracks - basically you've got to get the drums right and put down as much bass as you can,

then you take it in turns and Alan sets a day or two here and there for the guitar etc. so I did manage to get home for a couple of days during the recording period when I wasn't needed.

PR: Basically, I had Dave Greenfield's monitor system set up in my room which was (*gesturing*) this big so that was my entertainment, and me and Trevor (Dawkins) had the whole of one wing of the building to ourselves with living room, kitchens - we had the main kitchen and the dining room.

M: Oh God - 'Men Behaving Badly' - playing air guitar and the whole bit...

PR: Oh seriously, big time, and at one point we had two TVs stacked on top of each other and if anyone wanted to come in to the living room, because that was the main living room for everybody, we could play our computer games on the top one and they could watch the telly on the bottom.

At this point I can't help but cast my mind back to a little cider and gossip session back at the hotel after last year's Plymouth Heineken festival when Trevor D. thought it would be a really worthwhile

idea to take the back off of the TV, while it was still on, and 'adjust it' because then "the picture will flip over so that you have to turn the TV upside down to watch it" (of course, how silly of us to ask, Trevor). It was actually the TV in Sil's room that was the subject of the operation, and I still recall a Bristolian accent ringing in my ears as we vacated the room in fear of an explosion "if he blows my bloody telly up I'm coming downstairs to watch yours!" Don't try this at home kids.

PR: We raided the kitchen several times, got reasonably out of our heads...y'know...

M: No time to get bored then?

PR: No. Well, I also tried to fit in a bit of horse riding as there were stables there.

JE: Well I actually did a lot of yoga while we were doing the album. I also read a lot. Now I've got a baby and also when I'm not working on Stranglers stuff I'm working on my own material like the art exhibition, so going on the road or recording are actually among the only times that I get any spare time, so I did a lot of catching up on reading books and magazines, just relaxing, enjoying life. I enjoy the recording process though, because I think you can learn from any situation - watching a real craftsman like Alan and seeing the way he works is a fascinating process to watch.

M: So, overall, would you describe the working environment between the Stranglers in the studio as peaceful and harmonious or volatile but productive (thinks - or just plain old violent?!)

JB: Both of those things. I mean we're just human being; none of us are saints and none of us are demons.

PR: We do have communion before we start every day...

DG: It varies (*laughing*) it really does vary. We were all getting, as JE put it, 'Dungeon Fever' when we were rehearsing for so long in the South London studios 4-5 days a week. It was like a 9-5 job.

M: Presumably it helped concentrate your thoughts onto the Stranglers though?

DG: Oh yes, we got all the material done so it was worthwhile. Most of the tracks that are here were written early to mid '94.

JE: In the recording studio, very peaceful. If it got volatile anywhere it was during rehearsals, but that was another story!

JJ: (*doing something really quite vulgar via the end from where the sun don't shine - no, not even out of JJ's one*) "Fffrrp!"

M: Thankyou for sharing that thought with us. Can I take it that *that* means 'a bit of both'?

JJ: (*laughing raucously*) Well you wanted a deep and meaningful comment. I hope that picked up.

Oh I *do* so like to conclude these interviews in an academic and intellectual manner. Makes the time spent transcribing five tapes all seem worthwhile. Oh, incidentally, did I mention that 'About Time' is so shit-hot you'll need asbestos gloves to pick it up? No? Well, I just did, but unless it makes an appearance in your album collection soon you'll never know for sure, will you, so what are you waiting for? Me? I'm off to treat my rather nasty case of 'Word processor dibber's' fingers'. Goodnight all.

Marian

DESERT ISLAND DISCS III

Our series continues with the spotlight turned, this issue, on **Dave Greenfield's** aural affections. On a pleasant April afternoon, the growing ranks of the rat contingent at the Greenfield homestead were temporarily left to their own devices, and the massed banks of much used computer equipment were left neglected while we spent half an hour rifling through DG's vinyl vaults - off you go Dave. **M**

NATIONAL LAMPOON 'LEMMINGS'
"I can't remember where I first heard this one. It's a film soundtrack of a Woodstock spoof. Years ago during my first time in Australia I was doing a student union radio show and I had to pick a top ten - they had a copy of this album there, so I chose that and dropped gentle hints and they gave me the copy, which I was very pleased about. I've never seen the film itself (*featuring the likes of Chevy Chase and John Belushi*) but if anyone out there has a copy on tape.

ELECTRIC STORM - WHITE NOISE
That was synthesiser music before synthesisers! - very innovative, well

ahead of its time. I think this is the only thing they ever did.

SNOWGOOSE - CAMEL

That's instrumental. I always found it good for relaxing when travelling in the car. Very good. It's one solid track broken up into sections.

IN THE LAND OF GREY AND PINK - CARAVAN

That was a favourite. Until recently I'd heard very little Caravan stuff, apart from that album. A friend had a copy and I got into it.

BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS (eponymous)

It contains a lot of their greatest hits. When I was working in Germany in the old days all of the band were into that sort of style - the then-called 'underground' - and we used to play a lot of them. I really used to admire their musicianship in those days as well.

GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD - ELTON JOHN

It contains one of my favourite ever tracks 'Funeral For a Friend', an instrumental running into 'Love Lies Bleeding'. I rarely listen to lyrics unless I really get into something - for me it's the music that's most important.

CRIME OF THE CENTURY - SUPERTRAMP

An all-time favourite again - another one which everyone was playing. This album was

the one that I particularly liked from their repertoire.

THE YES ALBUM - YES

This was the third album they did. I enjoyed Yes up until the fourth album, which was a bit iffy - the fifth went downhill. John Anderson's vocal is unique.

LIVE AT FILLMORE EAST - THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION

Frank Zappa & the Mothers - a comedy album. I always admired Zappa's skill and ingenuity.

COMPLETION BACKWARDS PRINCIPLE - THE TUBES

Yes, I like the Tubes - they're a nice bunch of guys as well. (*They certainly have an 'original' stage presence!*) Yes, quite! (*much like the Stranglers?!*) I think they took things to greater extremes than we ever have!

DEEP PURPLE IN ROCK - DEEP PURPLE

I really liked John Lord when I was much younger in my pre-Strangler days and this was, I think, one of their best albums. I went off them a bit when the line-up changed.

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON - PINK FLOYD

I hate to be conformist, but I really like this one. The musicianship as well as the songs themselves.

The Stranglers' First major breakthrough came in November 1975 when they signed to Albion, a management company founded by Dai Davies and Derek Savage. Under Albion's Management the band performed a huge number of gigs, were signed by a major record label, went on two US tours and released their two most successful albums. The band's relationship with Albion ended in acrimonious circumstances, but it is fair to say that a great deal of the band's early success was due to the work of Dai Davies and Derek Savage. I spoke to Dai to find out more about The Stranglers arduous struggle to chart success.

Gary: How did you become involved with Albion?

Dai: I had been working with a company called Main Man which managed David Bowie. I became David Bowie's publicist and then I went off and started my own management company, which managed two bands Dux Deluxe and Brinsley Schwartz. Neither of these were very successful, but I just about made a living out of it. I then teamed up with Derek who had been a booking agent and we started Albion, I was doing management things and he was doing agency things.

G: When was this, the early seventies?

D: No much later than that, around 1975. I think that The Stranglers were the first group that we took on in a management sense.

G: Weren't the band quite persistent in their attempts to get you interested?

D: Actually, what happened was I heard about them the first day that I started work with Derek because I think that he had heard them in a recording studio somewhere. He described them in almost comic terms, I think that they all had bleached blonde hair at that time. I thought that they sounded interesting and went to see them play at a gig somewhere in Fulham. At that time they had the Scandinavian guitar player.

G: Hans Warmling.

D: That's it, yeah. They sort of reminded me of Velvet Underground and Tommy James and the Shandelles.

G: The band's music was more mellow then, almost soft rock.

D: I liked their music because it had a kind of psychedelic edge to it, which I was really into at the time. I don't remember exactly what happened but I think we met the band and suggested that they went away for three months and just did as many gigs as they could to become a tighter band.

1G: Were they just an average pub band at this stage?

D: Oh no, no, they were really unique, very different from anyone else. I think that if they were just an average pub band I would not have been interested.

G: You obviously saw plenty of potential.

D: Yeah, but it was very ragged around the edges at that time, quite amateur. But they came back three months later and in that

DAI DAVIES INTERVIEW

10th NOVEMBER 1994

By Gary Logan

time they had replaced Hans with Dave Greenfield and on top of all the other elements they had transplanted this really great Doors organ sound. I thought that they were really, really good but it was quite some time before I found anyone else to agree with me!

G: And that was Andrew Lander at United Artists.

D: But that was about a year and a half after I first met the band.

G: During that time it was just a succession of gigs with little crowd reaction.

D: Half the time the promoter would ring me up the next day and say 'That was the worst band I have ever seen! In regard to the audiences half would leave and go to the bar, a quarter would move to the back and be completely mystified by what was going on, and the remaining quarter would stay at the front and get terribly excited. But often the promoters would not want the band back because they were too weird for them.

G: Didn't you have to get up to all sorts of tricks to ensure that the band managed to get further bookings?



D: Yes, booking them under different names and all that. The sad fact is that people are very slow to accept radically different things. People were very slow to accept what The Stranglers were doing. I suppose that they got lucky in a way because the punk thing happened, although actually punk had been there for several years with American bands like New York Dolls and Iggy and the Stooges. The Stranglers were not a punk band in the way The Clash or The Sex Pistols were, but there was a more broad minded approach to music as a result of punk which The Stranglers benefited from.

G: Did the band deliberately become more aggressive to fit into the punk role or was it just a natural progression?

D: I suppose that they could not fail to be influenced by what was happening at the time around them. I suppose that the fact

that The Damned and The Sex Pistols were getting attention perhaps influenced them subconsciously to become more aggressive. Also they naturally became more aggressive because they were so pissed off about being ignored for so long! I can't remember how many gigs they did before they signed, but it was probably about 500, and to be travelling up and down the country with lots of disasters, and being very poor because there was no record company to provide money and we as a company were not well off enough to fund them, inevitably created some aggression. Before the UA deal the band endured a hand to mouth existence for 18 months.

G: Did you ever think of giving up at this stage? Did you think that you would never get a record deal?

D: I don't remember feeling like that, my partner at one point said 'How can you possibly go on?' but it never occurred to me not to persevere with the group.

G: Did you deal with the band on individual terms, or was one member the spokesman for the band?

D: Well at that time Jet was the one who was most organised.

G: He had many years of business experience.

D: That's right, so he would keep receipts, make sure that the band managed to get to gigs on time. Jean was the most opinionated member, so for those reasons those were the two to which I spoke to most. We got on very well at that point, from time to time they would stay at my place and sleep on the floor.

G: So it was a friendship as well as a business relationship?

D: It is different now because my clients are much younger than me and it is a more detached relationship. But at that time I was the same age, indeed younger than three of the band, so we were of the same age group. It was all very amicable.

G: Were any other labels interested in the band before the UA deal?

D: No.

G: Do you think the UA signing would have been possible without Andrew Lauder?

D: No, we have been very good friends for years, and that friendship certainly helped in getting The Stranglers deal. It took over a year to persuade him because at first he thought that they were a bit difficult to understand. But he gradually came around and the changing musical climate made the possibility of their success more likely. I know that there was a big argument raging with UA over whether to sign The Stranglers or carry on with The Groundhogs.

G: Which were another of Andrew's bands.

D: They didn't have the money to do both, it

was a case of either pick up The Groundhogs option and not sign The Stranglers, or sign The Stranglers and drop The Groundhogs. At the end of the day Andrew won the argument and they signed The Stranglers.

G: And the rest is history.

D: I think that given another six months they probably would have got a deal elsewhere.

G: But there was still a great deal of hard work to do, once the record deal was signed.

D: Well, it did start going well quite quickly after we had signed. The beauty of a band that has done over 500 gigs before reaching the studio is that they are very, very good.

They had written a lot of songs by that time, and I think that they recorded the first album and half the second album in the first session at TW studios in Fulham.

G: Did you have any input into which songs went onto the first album?

D: No not really, nobody did. It was pretty obvious which songs were going onto the album. In the early days I did choose the singles, but as they became more successful they started choosing the singles. Obviously as a manager you get listened to much more at the beginning than after there's been some success.

G: The press reaction at this time was great, the band were on the covers of virtually every music paper when Rattus was released.

D: Well, we actually bought them! What happened was that we bought the back cover space of every music paper, and produced an advert for the album, which we made up to look like that paper's front page. We sent in this advert at the very last minute just as the papers were being printed, so hopefully they would not have time to object and pull the ad. Sounds were the only paper to object, but it did look as though the band were on every front page! The vendors of course did not know which was the proper front page, so quite a lot of them put ours on the newsstands.

G: Didn't you have a hand in creating 'Celia and the Mutations'?

D: That's right, Celia was a girl that I knew and I wanted to do a Tommy James song because although he was a pop artist he had written some quite psychedelic songs. Jean really liked the stuff as well.

G: And where did you find Celia, was she in another band?

D: No she wasn't actually, she was a make up artist who had done the band's make up for one of the albums. The Mutations idea wasn't as successful as we hoped, but we did do a New Mutations which consisted of Terry Williams the drummer from Man, Wilko Johnson and Jeanlacques.

G: Wilko was one of the acts at the Front row festival, did you have anything to do with that?

D: Yeah, we organised that. The festival was designed to try and save the Hope and Anchor which was having financial problems at the time.

G: Was this because the pub rock scene was beginning to wane?

D: Well the Hope and Anchor was run by a guy called Fred Grainger who was a really

well meaning guy but an awful businessman. He had got himself into great debt with the brewery who were going to shut him down. We did the festival to try and save him, but unfortunately the money we made did not save him because he made the same mistakes again. When he did eventually go down we bought the lease. At this stage we were already running the Nashville.

G: So you were running the pub and the venue?

D: No, we ran the Nashville as a venue, we didn't actually run the bar. Later on we ran both at the Hope and Anchor, but initially we booked bands and gave them 75% of the door receipts and kept the rest ourselves, which helped to pay the publicity and running costs. The Nashville was around 1975-76, and was such a great success the brewery gave us the Red Cow to run and then the Hope and Anchor after the demise of Fred Grainger.

G: Was this a profitable line of work?

D: Yes it was, not hugely but it more than paid for itself. Mainly it was enormous fun and a good base for a business. You saw a number of great bands and it was my social life as well.

G: After Rattus and No more heroes, Black and White was quite a departure in style, how did you react to this change of style?

D: I was not keen on it really. Looking back at it now Black and White is a really good album, but at the time as their manager I thought that it was a mistake to sacrifice those Hugh Cornwell singles which were a guarantee of selling a lot of records. I thought that not having those singles on the albums would damage the band commercially. When the band changed direction, and lost sight of the singles factor, I was disappointed and lost interest.

G: There are still some good tunes on Black and White though. Tank and Toiler still feature in the live set. The band obviously thought that they needed to move on.

D: That is fair enough, but they were not successful enough overseas to neglect single releases.

G: I suppose that the band's 'second coming' came about due to the success of a single 'Golden Brown'.

D: Yeah, of course, but Hugh did have that knack of writing hit singles. I think that the problem with the band's 'second coming' was that they could not rebuild album sales again to any great heights.

G: Weren't you responsible for organising the first American tours?

D: The first couple of tours which both created a buzz without any major success. One of the problems with America was that the senior level of management at the record company A&M, did not really get on with the band. The aggressively English nature of the band alienated the record company.

G: To be honest though, comments like 'Americans have got smaller brains' can't have helped!

D: Well Jean said that to the president of A&M, who was offended by it!

G: Was it such a big thing to 'break' America?

D: Oh yes, when we failed to have success

in America it seemed a backward step. It is quite common for bands who are successful in Britain to fail in America, whereas bands that have not found success in Britain have a better chance of succeeding because they have the time and the will to put everything into it. Successful bands just can't afford to spend 5 or 6 months on the road in America gradually breaking it, which is probably the only way that you can do it. It is also very demoralising to play 200 capacity clubs in America, when in Britain you are playing to 2000.

G: Was it at this stage that your relationship with the band started to deteriorate?

D: I think that America gave us cause to disagree, because as I said it was such a big thing to break America. The American thing strained our relationship because I suppose that they were annoyed that things were not happening quickly enough, and I was blamed for that which of course was very unreasonable of them because the US takes a long time to break. Equally I was annoyed with them because they did not seem to understand the amount of effort involved, which actually was very unreasonable of me because had I been more experienced I would have understood their point of view.

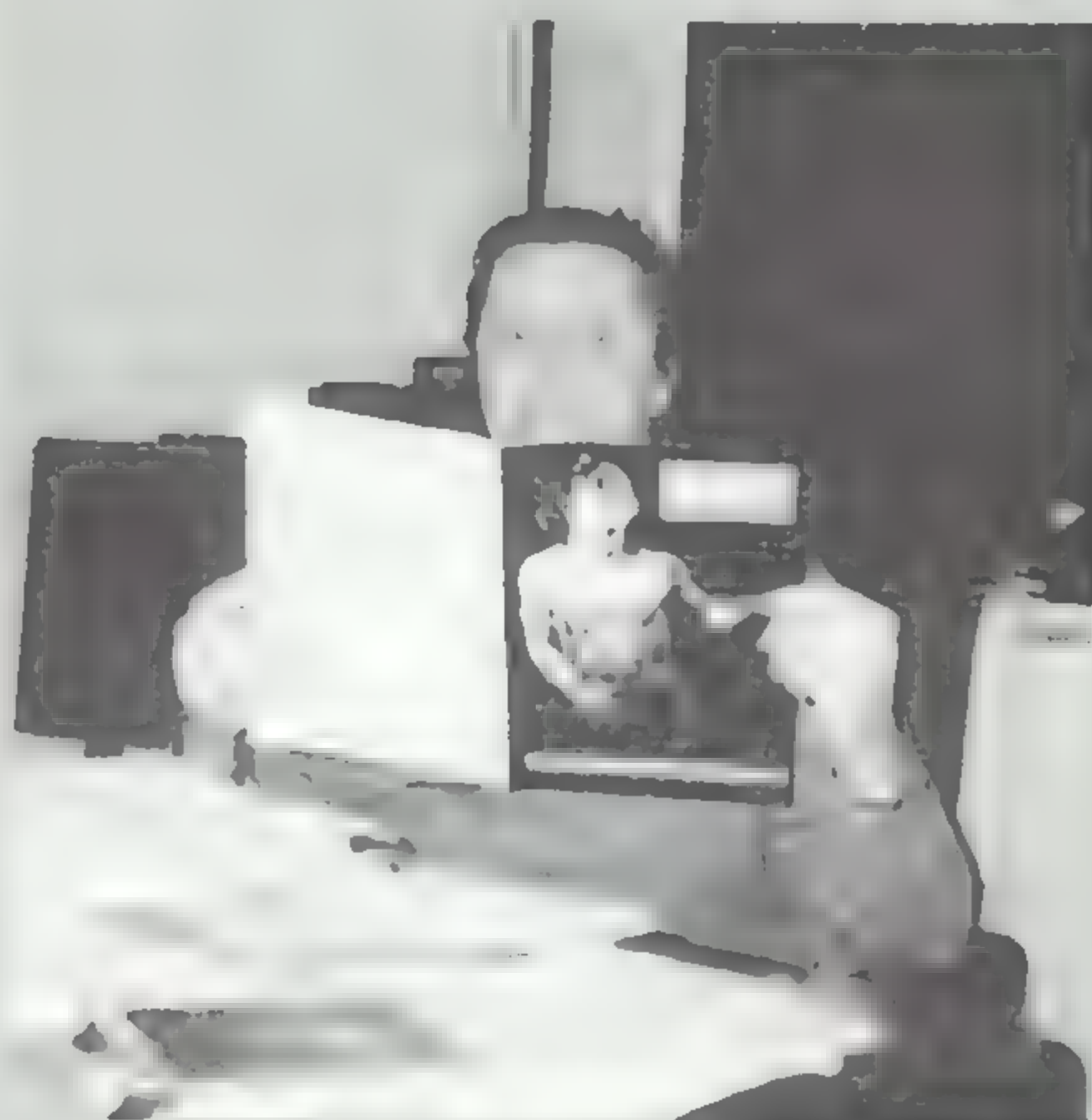
G: So the bands attitude was starting to change towards you?

D: To be honest, when you experience success after years of struggle and hardship it's actually a very weird and stressful time for everybody, because success is almost as stressful as failure, because it's such a radical change of life. The band had put up with two years of everyone telling them that they were wonderful. All this sudden success was obviously causing some friction within the band.

G: Didn't JJ walk out on the band at one stage?

D: Yeah, they were rehearsing the Black and White album up in Lincolnshire, and we went up to visit. JJ fell out with the rest of the band and as we were driving away he jumped in the car with us and said that he had left the band. Fortunately in the course of driving him home I managed to persuade him not to leave the band. But that is the sort of thing that happens when you become successful, it does create an enormous strain on people's relationships. You also had all kinds of people who hung around the band, and tried to undermine the bands relationship with the management.

G: I suppose that it is like a football fan who always thinks that he can pick a better team



than the manager.

D: Yeah, being a band manager is a job that almost everyone thinks that he can do, because it looks easy from the sidelines. I think that people formed behind The Stranglers or didn't, but those who did become fanatical about the band.

G: Is it right that when you announced that you were quitting, the band casually said 'OK off you go then!'

D: No it wasn't like that. What happened was that anything that went wrong we found ourselves blamed for even though many of the things were way beyond our control. I suppose what really ended our relationship was when they had a friend of theirs who was a lawyer investigate all the finances in case we had cheated them, which obviously I found very offensive. They didn't find anything because there wasn't anything to find, but I was furious that they would even question that.

G: Were you still managing the band then?

D: No, Ian Grant who was a junior partner at Albion became more involved in managing the band, and eventually took over as manager when our relationship with the band ruptured.

G: It was a very acrimonious ending to your relationship, with the band taking you to court.

D: There wasn't a court case, but there was a lot of legal activity! Obviously you can not be very friendly with people when your lawyers are battling each other!

I have hardly seen the band since then apart from Hugh who after his split from the band rekindled our relationship. Immediately after our relationship ended I was very pissed off with the band, because I thought that they had been very ungrateful. I didn't think that they would have been as successful as they were without me, and I felt irritated with them that they did not recognise that. (laughs).

G: But for you, The Stranglers had been your first major success.

D: Yes, Andrew had been very successful before, but it was my first success working for myself. We all lived the life at the time, and it was great fun if you were there.

G: It was certainly an eventful period.

D: Oh yes there was always something going on, journalists being kidnapped and all that. The band didn't like journalists much because they'd never had much support from them apart from a few like Chas De Whally who championed them early on. The band didn't feel any debt of gratitude to the press, because they had succeeded despite the press.

G: Do the good memories of the band, outnumber the bad?

D: On the whole yes. I think that their greatest success, their most successful albums, were under my managership. The Stranglers combined being an eccentric, radical band with having the ability to write great singles, which is very rare. It is also very subversive stuff getting songs like Peaches onto Radio 1!

"SPACE ALIENS TURNED OUR SON INTO AN OLIVE"

By Sally B. & M.

The Date: Friday 13th January 1995 – ooh er!

The Time: 6.30am

Me: Curled up on sofa, watching T.V. with cup of tea and sleeping bag, trying not to freeze to death.

Mind you, it could have been worse. If I'd been in Marian's shoes, I'd already have been up for 1½ hours and would be freezing to death on the set of The Big Breakfast waiting for Paul & JJ to do their stint so that I could go back to the office to start a days work. Lovely!

It all started with a phone call from subscriber Andy Harris, who is also the researcher for the Friday edition of The Big Breakfast, and resulted in Marian & I trekking down to London to ask Andy just what possessed him to get the band on, and whether or not Zig & Zag are really aliens, or just stuffed puppets with arms up their arses.....

Erm, actually they *are* real.

SB: For those of us who either missed the show or were not aware of it, tell us about what happened.

AH: Well we had Amanda de Cadenet as our guest presenter (standing in for Gaby Roslin), and I found out that she had been given a bass guitar by her husband John Taylor, for Christmas. So, I thought let's get the bass into the show somehow. Then I got the idea for a lesson on how to play the thing taught by JJ. I called up Marian and said could we have JJ on the show this Friday, and she said yes.

M: That was a little bit presumptuous of me really wasn't it?

AH: It was a bit, yes!

SB: I was there for her reaction after she

put the phone down!

AH: I then fainted with complete joy and glee. But I knew they'd be game for a laugh.

M: They were certainly that! No, actually they were very well behaved apart from the fact that Paul and I ate almost all of JJ's toast and marmalade before JJ got back to the green room. Amazingly small green room actually. I pictured the place as enormous and it really isn't that big.

AH: We've just moved into a new studio.

M: You are still in the house though?

AH: Yes, the new bit is right next door to the house. You probably saw it – that big blue stairway leads to a massive new production studio.

M: One thing I noticed in the studio was how brightly coloured everything was. When you're standing there throughout a show, you must get a real migraine! Especially when you have to get up at 2.45 in the morning to face it.

SB: We're conducting an interview on top of a toy box here you know. (The table in this particular establishment does indeed resemble a kiddies toy box) Any way, what I want to know is – is it really as much fun as it looks working there? I mean is it that laid back or is it a real panic behind the scenes?

AH: During the show from 7-9am is incredibly good fun, I love it. It's the best job in the entire world. During the week it is incredibly high pressure, because you have to get loads of items together for the show.

Thursday, which is the day before my show, is horrendous. I have to write the script, get late guests in etc. It really is very difficult, very angstridden. Come nine o'clock, the relief is wonderful. It's like an enormous bowel movement. (There is a stunned gasp from us gentle females at this point).

AH: That's the best way to describe it, really! When you have a really good dump, and afterwards you just go AAAAAHHHHH!!!

M: Where do you get the inspiration for some of the items – what makes you suddenly think "ooh, I'll get a violin-playing Halibut on" or whatever?

AH: We look through the papers etc and see if there is anything going on that week that is unusual or different and contact the people involved. Like for instance there was a world black pudding contest going on at one stage, so we got people in on that one and this week was Harry Houdini's 111th birthday, so we got Mark Little (who is, incidentally, a huge fan of the band himself), to do an escapology routine and at the same time Edwina Currie had just released her latest paperback, so I thought to give Mark an incentive to get out of the straight jacket we'd threaten him with Edwina Currie reading excerpts from her book.

M: Can you usually get who you want on the show or do you have to go



through a ton and a half of people to contact them?

AH: It varies, sometimes yes, and sometimes no. With Edwina Currie, I just phoned her up at home and asked her if she would like to come on the show and do a couple of bits and pieces, like from time to time pop up and start reading parts of her book so that we could all shout "NOT NOW EDWINA!!" and she was up for it so....

M: One thing that I've noticed about the programme is that it does tend to inspire people to come out of themselves.

SB: They stop taking themselves so seriously.

AH: Normally totally reserved people go mad.

M: Which is great. Is it as good an atmosphere as it seems?

AH: On the day it is, yeah. Everyone likes each other – there's Toby....

M & SB: TOBY!!!!

AH: Everyone loves Toby.

M & SB: We love Toby...(followed by various cooings of "he's cute", and "what a pixie" etc.)

AH: He's the nicest guy in the world, wonderful to work with. Everyone is wonderful to work with. It's the best job in the world.

SB: It seems to come across as much like a night out on the piss without the drink of course, but it's very much mates together that sort of thing.

AH: If you compare it to GMTV, or something like that....

SB: I'd rather not!

AH: It's so boring, they just do what you expect them to.

SB: Actually GMTV was very funny at 6.30 this morning because the female presenter had this gigantic coughing fit – it was brilliant!

M: Sounds like the funniest thing that has ever happened on that programme!

SB: It was great, she kept apologising for it. At one stage she said that it wasn't just one frog in her throat, but a herd of frogs!!

M: Well, I happen to know that, when we first got chattin', many moons ago, you were working for the Sunday Sport. Tell us all about that.

AH: In the early days, the Sport was brilliant. It was funny stories like space aliens turned our son into an olive and things like that.

SB: Excuse me, did you say an olive?

AH: Yes. In the early days it was just funny stuff like that.

M: Didn't you get a bit bored with the "coo, look at the tits on that" approach?

AH: Yes, horribly so. I mean it's fine for a paper to have pictures of topless women, but in the last two years the Sport has turned into a porn mag. I abhor the Sport now, I hate it. I hated my last year and a half there. It was the worst job ever in the history of humanity.

M: So how did you get the job at The Big

Breakfast?

AH: I wrote Paul Ross a letter – he was doing The Word at the time and I really liked him, he was great on the radio, and I really wanted to work with him. So, I sent off this letter and thought nothing of it. About three weeks later I got a phone call from Planet 24, who make The Big Breakfast, saying could I go in for an interview. So, I had the interview which was to work in the development office at Planet 24 and didn't get the job. About three weeks later after I had written them a letter saying that I didn't care how many times they turned me down, I still wanted to work for them, I got another phone call asking me to interview for a slot on the Big Breakfast called "of the moment" – which is Gaby's serious interview each morning on the show – and they gave me the job. After about three months I moved on to being a day researcher. I've just moved on to a new show on BBC1, which will be on Friday evenings with Dale "Supermarket Sweep" Winton, Daley Thompson and Lisa Tarbuck.

M: DALE! Oh No!

AH: Dale Winton is going to be the god of television in a few years time, he's such a hero, he's brilliant.

M: He does have a sort of kitsch appeal..

AH: Yeah, I mean, he's as camp as Butlins, but he is brilliant.

M: Will that interfere with your work on the Big Breakfast?

AH: Next week is my last week, but I'll probably go back to it in about 15 weeks.

M: How do you cope with the unsociable hours?

AH: It's alright. The day before the show you have to go into the house for a meeting, to talk about your ideas for the show, to talk to Gaby and Mark and things. So you start at about 8am on the Thursday morning and it can go on until about 9am on the Friday. I usually go to bed at about 9pm on Thursday night and then get up at 2.45am to go to work.

SB: One thing I wanted to ask you was about Gaby's serious interview; where on earth do you find the people? I mean some of the stories, though serious, are almost too incredible.

AH: Yes, invariably they are weird. About 80% of the time we just find them in the press and then contact them, and a lot of the time people will say yes because everybody loves Gaby and wants to meet her.

M: She seems very approachable and caring....

SB: Yes, is she really that much of a sweetheart?

AH: She is, unfortunately, the nicest person in the whole world. She's beautiful, she's a really nice person....

M: And a bit of a softie when it comes to animals....

AH: Absolutely, she has a little dog called Chester and she is getting married soon. Everyone loves her. She is Jewish, and cottoned on to the fact that I'm Jewish, so she's like family now because of that.

M: So is there anyone on the show who is totally vile and a real pain to work with – you don't have to name names but do you have to deal with people being really unpleasant sometimes?

AH: There was one guy who came on and was such a luvvy, he refused to do certain things, he had no sense of humour, was glum all the way through the show and was horrible. There have been people like that. A certain Scottish pop band weren't too joyful either. Most of the time though, people are great.

M: Well people should know what to expect from the show by now. JJ and Paul really enjoyed it. Paul was bouncing around the house being cheeky to all the make-up ladies....

AH: Paul was lovely. He stayed on afterwards and was chatting away quite happily. It was such a pleasure to get them on.

M: What do you think of the Stranglers these days then?

AH: Well, Paul is extremely talented, he sings well and performs well too. But he shouldn't have had his hair cut.

M & SB: (howls of agreement) NO!!!!

AH: That was a big mistake. The first time I saw the band with Paul, I took my wife and her sister and they both fell madly in love with him, cause he is so good on stage.

From here on in, the conversation degenerated into a discussion on topics neither Stranglers- nor Big Breakfast-related such as "my Granny farted at the Proms" etc – so it's probably best to end this article here.

Many thanks to all at The Big Breakfast, especially Andy Harris, and the Docklands Light Railway for scaring the living shit out of me on the way to the interview.

Sally B.



Photo: Cliv Medlicott

All rights

Boom! - Sniff My Rubber!

Paul Roberts

Do the names Senna, Moss, Fangio, Stewart, Hill, Roberts, Schumaker, Mansell ring any bells?.....Roberts?

No, they never worked in churches or on dairy farms, they are/were drivers of very fast cars. Yes, I can remember doing 71mph down the M1 many, many times, the wind in my hair (from the fan), girls all over the back seats (my sisters), 1 litre under the bonnet (warming up my milk), two strong hands on the wheel (my dad's) and my mum with that fucking tissue again - family bloody holidays.

Well you probably wouldn't think of them sitting 4 or 5 inches above the ground in a plastic seat or on a crate with four 9" wheels propelling them around a precarious concrete circuit and we're not talking about shopping with your ma aged 5. I'm talking about 'go-karting', yes, go-karting and most, if not all, of today's Formula One drivers have done it. It's certainly one of the most enjoyable pursuits I have involved myself in for a long time, although unlike some of my friends parachuting and hang-gliding have not found a place in my guts.

Although it has been around a long time, karting seems to be on the up. I started about 18 months ago, and tracks are shooting up everywhere. The trend used to be on a kind of corporate level where companies would hire the track for the afternoon or evening and form groups of 5 or more people to compete against each other, the minimum being 40 people at £40 each. But there is another side to karting which is called 'Practise'. This is good for people who want to go faster - tracks willing - because basically during a 'Race Meeting' it is not necessarily the fastest driver who keeps the best line, and the opposition at bay. At practise you can meet other very good drivers and set up much more competitive meetings, while improving on your driving.

The tracks are set up with P.A., lighting, computer controlled read-out for pitstops, times, positions etc., marshalls, pits with monitors to follow the racing and even grandstand and winners' rostrum. It is certainly authentic. Now you're probably thinking "Yeah, just like the funfair huh?", and if you go to a naff gaff this is fair comment, but a decent track is very fast and very dangerous and sceptics would soon be holding their bollocks very tightly.

The first time I went, I couldn't believe someone was going to let me drive one of their machines like I did and after finishing asked the pit-steward if I could go again. "Sure" he said, "if you pay again". So I was hooked.

The particular karts I drive are 'Tomcats' 160cc and they can do about 40 mph which doesn't sound too fast, but think about sliding down a snowy hill with your arse on a tray - feels fast eh? You have a brake, an accelerator and a very small steering wheel - two inches of movement is equivalent to about a whole turn on an average car wheel. They take about 4-5 seconds to reach top speed depending on clutch size, the bigger the clutch the faster the top end, but the slower the acceleration and vice-versa (I think).



Yeah, OK the technical stuff, yawn, is really interesting but...well basically the cost depends on the track, and sometimes the karts. Some places have twin-engined machines (v. fast); of course the championship karts can go well in excess of 100 mph. Ten pounds will usually get you fifteen minutes 'practise' and all accessories are supplied. Helmets - usually well used and a bit stinky, gloves, a lecture before you first go and fireproof overalls. Should a kart turn over it can easily burst into flames, and racing so close - within a few inches of each other - you have to be very aware as the slightest nudge will lift it.

I have had a few nasty accidents. I once sheared off my rear driving wheel on a very fast hairpin bend and carried on for about 100 yards thinking it was a heavy knock when I realised I had sparks pouring from the back of my kart. I also

hit a safety board head on at about 35 mph - wakey wakey. To get the best from it though you really have to dare and push yourself and hope your reflexes and judgment will see you through, and you must put your trust in the machine.

It certainly is a rough ride but contrary to popular belief not just the boys want to do it - plenty of ladies get involved - hi Marian ("erm., I would, but I'm perming the dog's ears this weekend" - cowardly Ed.) In fact a meeting I did recently saw a girl finishing 9th place with loads of guys way behind. My best result was probably 2nd place in a 48 driver race, but I have definitely gone faster in practise.

The only thing to be careful of really is the anorak brigade, but they're everywhere, and smart pretty tracks which in my

experience are more concerned with safety and 'fun', which is great, but not for a speed freak, though they can still be exciting. Then again, some rugged tracks are crap. I've been to quite a few in London and one of the best is 'Daytona' based in White City, an excellent place with 2 tracks that combine to make a 35 second GP circuit (designed by Damon Hill). Most have what they call 'Diners' (crap expression) - basically, caterers in flash huts-cum-kitchens who will prepare nosh for you. Also, when you compete, winners trophies/medals and champagne are handed out. Through some of the tracks it is possible to get

involved in bigger events, and they can get well serious, for large sums of dosh and possibly more. The new Senna will have to come from somewhere. Go for it.



The Chronicles of Vlad

Chapter Three...

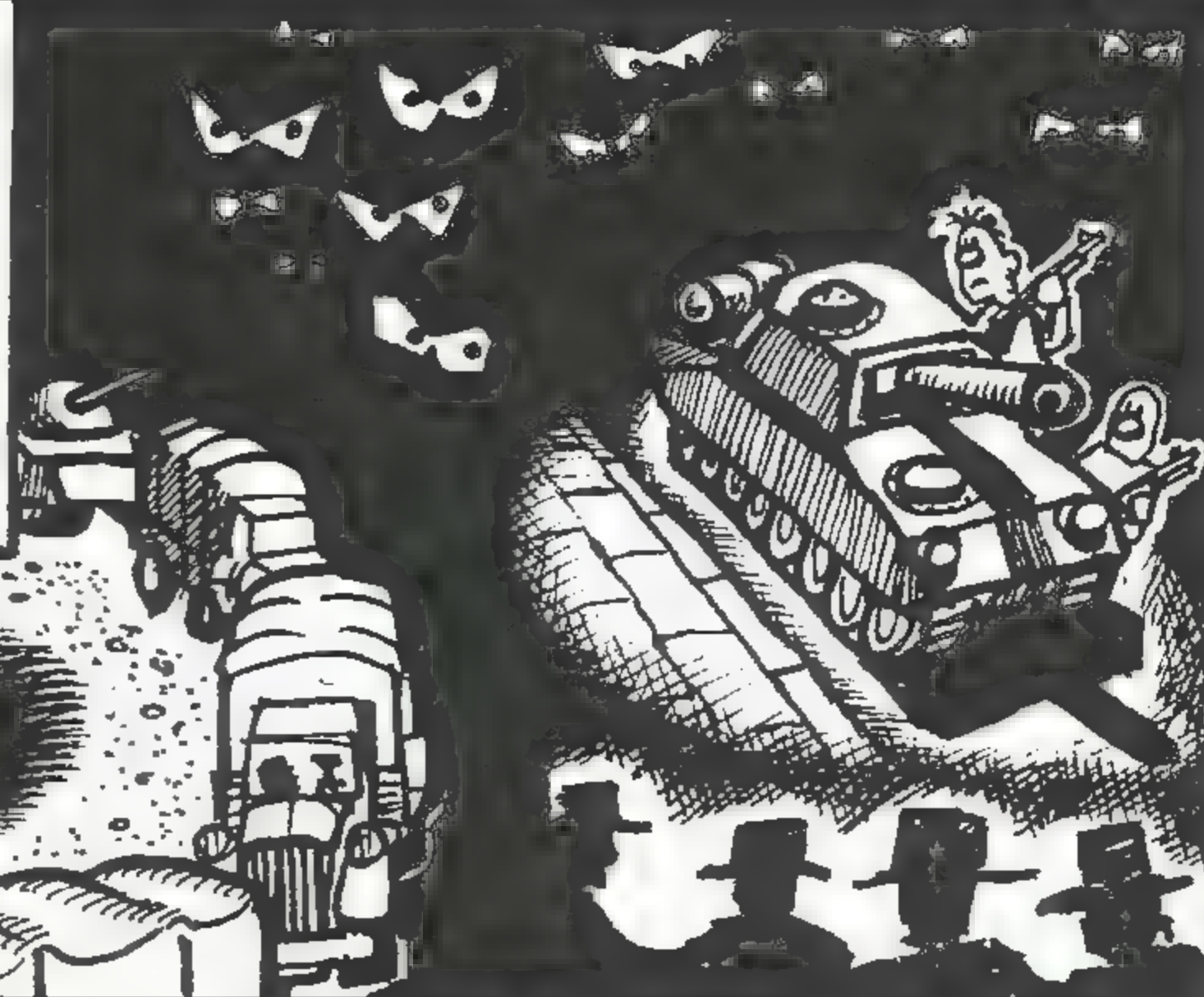
Vladimir & the Beast (Pt.III)

Thank you my father land, for helping me to be totally re-integrated and normalised. Only in the world's greatest socialist democracy could one hope to be forgiven for losing temporary sight of the aims and goals of the Marxist/Leninist revolution..

Two years it took me to be cured of my illness and being still a relatively young and fit man I was still in search of fulfilment. The memory of Olga, Sergei and my two children motivated me to seek an occupation that would both repay my debt to my great Party and obviously help the way to international socialism.

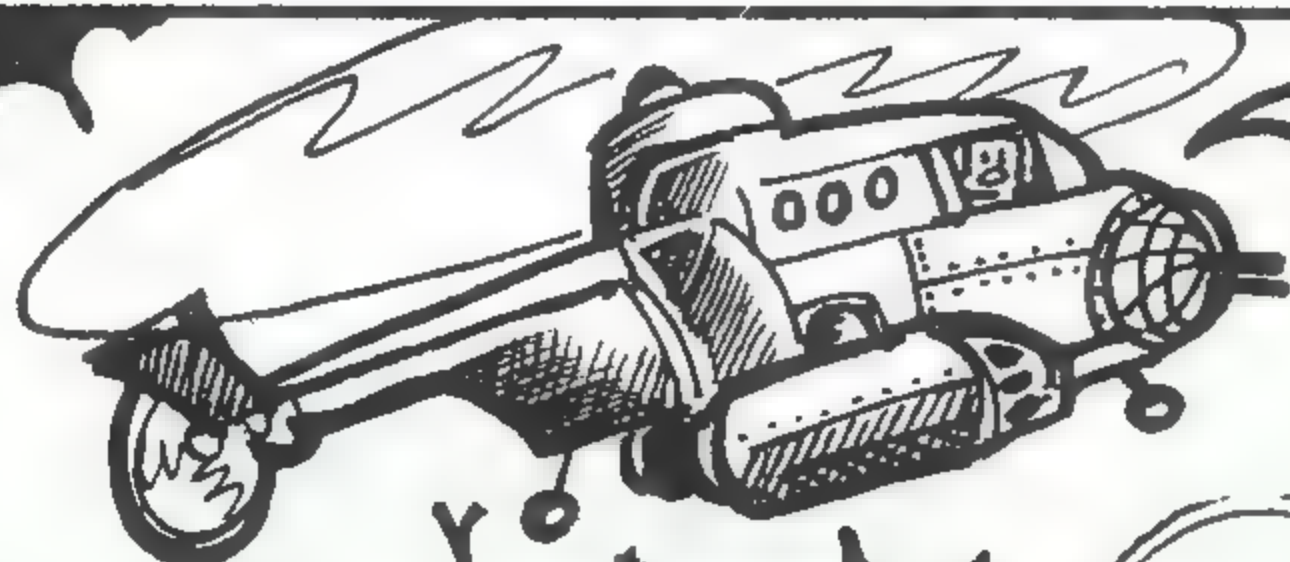


I was still unable to resume my lectureship in sub nucleonic particle physics and therefore volunteered to help our Afghan comrades in their great struggle for liberation. I was readily accepted into a motorised maintenance unit.

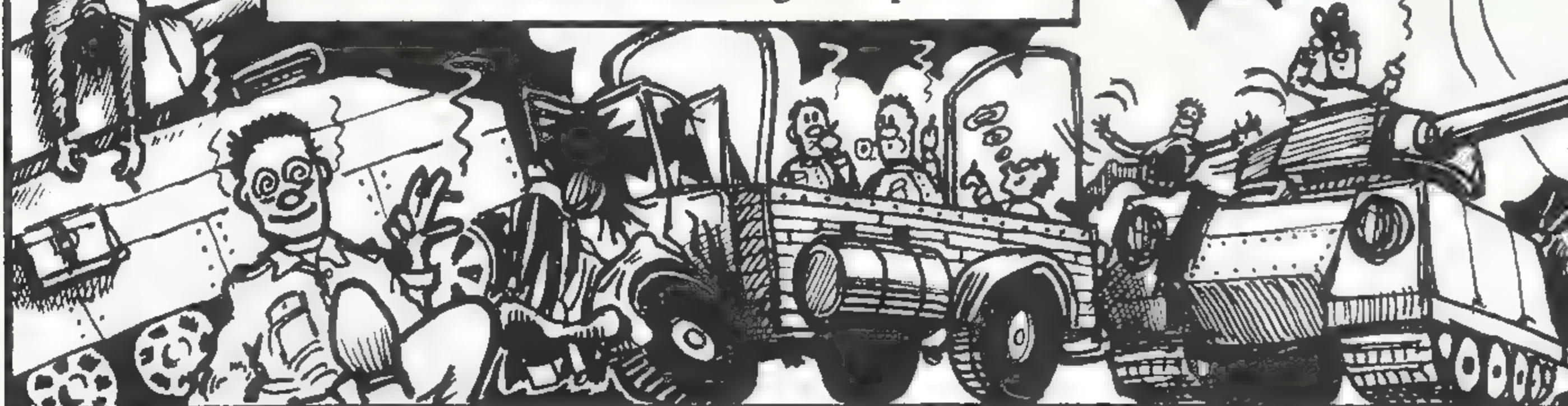


It was not long before I realised that our support for the liberation struggle of our comrades in Afghanistan was not viewed altogether unanimously by the local population. In fact, we were not allowed outside the barracks unless we were in large armoured groups.

During our brief stay in Afghanistan we had discovered some of the very few pleasures open to visitors to this desolate place.



A local concoction called hashish was being increasingly used by our troops, and many of the helicopter, gunship and tank crews moreover, would smoke large chillums and joints before embarking on missions around the mountains surrounding the capital.



Every week, comrades who had fallen into the hands of the rebels would be found in various states of dismemberment around the camp. Those unlucky enough to be still alive were sent for rehabilitation to the German Democratic Republic since this would prevent any undue alarm by our loved ones back home.....

The wisdom of this policy is evidence of our leaders' great care for their people. Apart from the hashish, there was not much to divert one during the cold mountain nights, and increasingly there were signs of the troops acquiring the illness of which I had previously been cured. And therefore my attention was focused more on looking after the few animals that were kept within the military compound.



As is often the case between human beings and animals, a close bond of affection can develop, and I became close to a camel named Dimitri.



Aah, dear Dimitri. No one can really understand the relationship between a man and his camel....



....as was the case with the army doctors and my superiors who sent me to convalesce in the German Democratic Republic.



strangled LETTERS

Got anything to say?.....

I may need to edit your letter in order to be able to print as many as possible. If you would rather have yours printed in full or not at all, please let me know.

THE BOOTLEG STRANGLERS

It was interesting to read the band's view on their own bootlegs in issue 41. Especially as in the last two years there have been a fair few illegal CD releases (mainly the Cornwell years). So, from the bootleg point of view, the Stranglers' popularity has grown, not slumped, since the new line-up came into force! After seeing them live and buying the new legal releases, to me this is not surprising as they seemed to have re-invented themselves to a very powerful degree. Never have I seen so many happy faces in the audiences! The reason I buy the legal and illegal releases is that I want everything they've produced. What true fan does not?

The trouble with bootlegs (from the artists' point of view) is that there are no restrictions on what is being released (like there is with a normal record label). However, a band which plays a lot of concerts may see one or two of these concerts come out on CD but most of these only run to a pressing of about 500. You see, if there were no bootlegs at all, fans would really have a rough ride because bands only seem to release an album every three or five years. That is where they can lose a good number of fans. About 90% of an audience is made up of diehard fans but the other 10% (who are just as important) are the curious ones who want to know what other records they can buy on this fascinating group that they've just discovered. The curious can turn into the dedicated overnight and when they've bought all the normal releases they want something a bit extra special. I've been a fan of the band since 1977 and if had not been for boots I might have lost interest because the legal releases have been too thin on the ground. So, the boots fill the gap between each new release.

From reading the interview you can gather that the band despises releases of their demos. The trouble, from their point of view, comes from the fact that they have "binned" certain recordings (as was the case with the track "You") and then next month they reappear on a boot. That is understandable because someone in that studio has released it or leaked it to someone else. There is always someone, though, who looks upon that 'tatty little track' as being a piece of pure musical history. And let's face it, this is what makes music such a great love. From a fan's point of view, the more tracks that appear only makes life sweeter. If some other fan owns an unknown track, then you want to own it too!

The Stranglers should really go to town on the record vaults and release as much unreleased stuff as they can. Why? Because the fans would welcome it with open arms and make the band a bit of extra money at the same time. There is nothing wrong with that – after all, we all have bills to pay.

The two things that I dislike about bootleg CDs is that, firstly, the bootleggers could spare a bit of time and have a 'fair' recording remixed into a 'near excellent' grade. You've seen the

results with 'Anomalies' and it beats the legal counterpart hands down!

Secondly, some bootleggers keep re-issuing the same recording time and time again (with different titles, covers etc) and if you are not careful you can re-buy the same recording over and over again. So, don't be blind – use your head when faced with two new titles – are they different or the same?

This is where *Strangled* helps. I certainly did not buy a copy of 'Secret' and the other terror 'Let Us Introduce You To...', so, *Strangled* saved me twenty four quid! Good on you.

Anyway, the beautiful world of audio tapes is much better because you can swap tapes from all over the world and find some real gems! This is where *Strangled* should legalise some of these recordings (maybe remix them a bit so the quality is even better) and put a bit more money into the SIS coffers (*Oh, that we had the power – but unfortunately there's more red tape to it than that. M.*). I'm sure the fans would love it.

The Stranglers are far from being an over-bootlegged band. The lads should look at the mass production of Iggy Pop and Kraftwerk. The German techno wizards can never ever play a concert without being taped by somebody. Great for the fans but not for Ralf and Florian. If you heard the quality of these recordings (as Ralf has) you would be amazed as they are fantastic!! Blame DAT for that.

The Damned, on the other hand, are under-bootlegged, on CD especially – something that really confuses me, because they are still one of England's finest bands.

I think the Stranglers should be glad about being moderately bootlegged. It's not over the top and that means that fans can keep up with the bootleg world at a moderate pace. They are not tempted to spend so much money as, say, Kraftwerk fans.

One last thing to mention – about ten years ago, that genius and king of the piano, Jerry Lee Lewis, actually rampaged through a gas station (who were selling bootlegs of him). He dragged all of their stock onto the garage forecourt, poured petrol over them and lit a match. I bet the owner of the garage was a happy man. Hey, don't give John Ellis any more ideas, Jerry!

Robert Emms

LIES AND DECEPTION?

The article in 41 on Bootlegging was interesting but I don't think you could ever hope to stamp it out. I have, like many other fans, many live tapes but wouldn't dream of not buying an official release in favour of a bootleg, but these live tapes capture moments and energy that studio albums can't give, even recordings of different venues on the same tour differ considerably, so SIS would have to record each night on the tour and offer them for sale to the fans (maybe not a bad idea!). I have to pick up the occasional Stranglers concert tapes and will continue to because I enjoy live Stranglers and for no other reason. As for demo tapes it is interesting to hear a song in its first stages of life although these are usually 'crap' when compared to the final product and should be avoided, but when you're 'into' a band it's hard not to snap up something that other fans won't have. I work on open-air markets all week where the bootleggers used to make big money not just from music cassettes but also from bootlegging perfumes, designer watches, videos etc, etc. This has been stopped because the operators will not allow counterfeits or bootlegs to be purveyed on their markets. Maybe if Camden Market operators and councils followed this example it would go some way to ease the problem of the public being ripped off, as much as the manufacturers, by not selling these inferior products. As for the T-shirt guys – I didn't think Stranglers fans were so naive as to entertain these bastards outside gigs. I certainly wouldn't, that *is* ripping off the band and cannot be tolerated.

All the best to S.I.S. and the band, happy 21st when it comes.

Martin Rotherfield, Midlothian

Dear Marian,

It is no longer uncommon for music lovers to travel outside their own country to see the favourite bands so I write this letter as a warning to those who might be contemplating going to France. I hope by doing so no one else encounters the problems I have had. This letter is also partly an effort to vent my frustration at the situation I find myself in.

With the move towards larger and more elaborate stage shows it is not unusual for tours to concentrate on the large cities with the result that Dublin often gets bypassed. Though in recent times the number of international acts playing in Dublin has greatly increased there still remains some, like Pink Floyd, who have not played here. Wanting to see Pink Floyd and having been to London on many occasions I decided to travel to Paris instead. I sent payment for tickets to a company called PARIS LOISIRS SPECTACLE. They took my money but never sent any tickets. Since mid-July they have refused to reply to any of my correspondence and have at no stage offered any proof of having sent the tickets. I contacted the French Embassy, their Tourist Information Offices in both Dublin and Paris and finally the Ambassador himself all to no avail. To describe the attitude of the French Authorities as unhelpful is an understatement. After four months their only suggestion was that I contact the Irish Embassy in Paris. So the fraudulent activities of a French company are not, as I naively thought, the concern of the representatives of the French government in Ireland but a matter for the Irish Diplomatic Corps.

So, my advice for those intending travelling to France do not deal with a company called Paris Loisirs Spectacle and if you end up having problems in France expect no help from the French Authorities, who seem to condone the stealing of money from tourists.

Yours faithfully, Robert F. Carty,
Crumlin, Dublin.

A VISION OF THE PRESENT

For this long-time fan, the appeal of the Stranglers has always been their willingness to write songs that provoke thought beyond the mundane themes of mainstream pop music (ie love, sex and egocentricity) and the band's interest in broader subjects has been reflected in the pages of Strangled over the years. With the 20th anniversary of the existence of the Stranglers upon us, this seems a good excuse to reflect on the changes in the world around us since that fateful day in 1975 that has impacted on our lives so much.

One of the noticeable changes within the pages of Strangled in recent years is the appearance of the 'Rat Pack'. References to children and families have become more frequent, for obvious reasons: many Stranglers fans have 'grown up' with the band and become the mums and dads of a new generation. But have we brought our children into a society that is still moving forward? Is progress still the main function of society, as it has apparently been in the past? My suggestion is that the answer to both these questions is 'no' and that, in the UK at least, we stand on the edge of a future that becomes increasingly precarious and uncertain as each year goes by.

My memories of the 1970s have been clouded by the passage of time, but images I remember include free school milk, space hoppers, lollipop ladies, picket lines and Norman Hunter's sideburns. The words that come to mind are 'welfare', 'solidarity', 'aggro', 'consensus' and 'beer and sandwiches at number 10'. So what's changed? In terms of the images of the 90s, it really depends on what you focus on. Computers, satellite TV and mobile phones all reflect technological progress which cannot be denied; mortgages, interest-free credit, retail parks and executive share options might be a more cynical choice of images to reflect 90s society. However, it's the words of the 90s that perhaps reflect more accurately the changes since "Rattus" hit the charts.

The language of the media, at work, in schools and hospitals, is broadly similar and you can take your pick from these: 'flexibility', 'internal market', 'efficiency', 'labour costs' and of course, 'freedom of choice' and 'privatisation'. Add to these 'negative equity', 'crime wave', 'quangos', 'homelessness' and 'consumer credit' and you've got a fairly good picture of Britain today. So what, you may ask. Well, it's worth considering what these words mean for your average 'Brit' today.

Flexibility, efficiency, and labour costs translate into part-time work, short-term contracts and low wages; in short, insecurity. Negative equity and consumer credit tend to simply mean 'debt' – more insecurity. Internal markets, freedom of choice and privatisation seem to mean frequently postponed hospital appointments, second rate schools for many and high costs for essential services like water – yet more insecurity. The broader issues such as crime and homelessness need little explanation. So what can be done about this? Well, that's where quangos come in; get yourself appointed to one of these and you're in a position to influence some change. Unfortunately, the 'person profile' for

membership of a quango reads something like 'male, over 30, businessman/entrepreneur, with contacts in the Conservative Party' – any offers?

The general feeling of insecurity is all the more worrying since it is accompanied, in my view, with a feeling of powerlessness that is reflected in our institutions: non-elected quangos with more control over our lives than our democratic bodies; private monopolies in essential services; centralised control of schools and hospitals; and an unrepresentative electoral system, (the current government has not had the support of the majority of the electorate at any time during



Photo: Marian

the last 20 years). The campaign in which John Ellis is involved, against the M11 Link road, is a specific example of the difficulties that individuals and communities face in trying to have some control over what is happening to them in their everyday lives.

Can we do anything to take control of our lives? Community action, such as the anti-roads campaign, whilst difficult, nonetheless provide some counterbalance to the forces that seem to control us more and more. Exercising our rights as citizens and consumers as often and as vociferously as we can is something that every individual can do and such activity may help to ease the feelings of insecurity and powerlessness that seems to pervade society today. If anybody has any other ideas, please let us know. Anything that can steer us away from a future for our children that is characterised by isolation and escapism (a consequence of feeling insecure and powerless) can only be good.

Thanks for reading this far.

Tony Stalgis.

Dear Stranglers

As an avid fan for many years and also bass player in a Wirral "indie" band, "The Mexico Party", I am writing to yourselves, *Strangled*, and any other subscribers in gigging unsigned bands who are currently playing around the country trying to build up a fan base and some interest from indie/major labels.

I am becoming increasingly pissed off about the attitude of so-called 'PROFESSIONAL??' managers of venues who advertise in national gig guide papers, i.e. NME, Melody Maker etc, for bands to play.

As you know, the scenario of sending off a demo package, acknowledgement, then generally half a dozen phone calls to set up and confirm the date.

Once set up, there is the vague arrangement about a % taking on the door, and usually everything is hunky dory, i.e. friendly, helpful, encouraging vibes from some voice at the end of the line.

In reality, the band turn up, sometimes with their own fans on a coach or, if further afield, on their own after incurring hire costs for vans, petrol and sometimes hire of PA equipment. Next step, band set up, play. If good turnout and favourable response, generally get weighed in, funnily never quite what was agreed verbally. On the other hand, if it is a quiet night, then "tough shit". No money, thank you lads, or "kiss me arse", which is what happened to us recently at Edinburgh and York.

My point is, what can be done, if anything, for bands who have no back-up from promotion agencies and professional management. I have thought about contacting the Musicians Union about some advice or contacting the national music press to point out that some of these venues which they are promoting every week really don't do anything at all to encourage young bands.

Now don't get me wrong, I don't mind being a little out of pocket – breaking even is a bonus, but when you are £150 out of pocket and some naive manager rather patronisingly says "that's showbiz", it somehow takes the shine off the whole thing.

I just wonder what other subscribers' views are on this subject and also those concerned with "the best rock 'n' roll band ever".

Thanks very much for your time to read this.

Pete Carruthers, Wallasey, Merseyside.

Peter's letter raises a perennial issue that concerns bands who are just starting off. It's certainly a situation that's been around since I started playing pubs and clubs. The problem is created simply because managers of gigs know they can get away with it. They exploit the musician's desire to play and perform as well as the band's desire to get on with their career. They know that there will always be bands that are prepared to "pay to play" and they also know that the Musicians Union is not powerful enough to organise against the situation. I believe they did once run a campaign to blacklist these kinds of gigs, but it failed for the reasons mentioned above. Also, not all musicians are members of the Union and are not obliged to follow their recommendations. The effectiveness of the MU when it comes to dealing with anyone other than classical musicians is another story.

I would say it's time the MU at least published a list of "responsible" gigs where up and coming bands can play without being out of pocket. However, at the risk of sounding defeatist, unless the situation changes, new bands will have to be realistic and bite the bullet for a short time until they are able to move up the ladder and do gigs that will actually earn them money.

John Ellis

Dear Marian

I'm not sure where to begin with this one after all the rumours and counter rumours flying around over the past couple of weeks. So where do I get the truth? S.I.S.!

I've heard on Virgin Radio, read in various newspapers and magazines and seen on TV that Hugh Cornwell will be re-joining the Stranglers. Some say Cornwell is re-joining just to celebrate '20 years of' and will be appearing on tour, some just that he is to re-join the Stranglers.

Firstly, I do not for a moment believe Cornwell will ever return or would be allowed to return to the fold on a permanent basis, so I've ignored most of these stories. However, the possibility of Cornwell coming on stage and playing for a while is maybe not that difficult to believe. Personally I would *not* like to see Hugh on stage with the Stranglers ever again. OK, I loved Hugh for 16 years then *he* made *his* choice and left. He was also 'surprised and disappointed' that the Stranglers continued. Well bollocks to him, I'm not disappointed. There is a feeling of contempt towards Hugh fuelled by some of the stories coming out, i.e. in JJ's piece in Strangled when he told us that Hugh had been rehearsing with another band 6 months before he left the Stranglers. Why then should we welcome him back like some lost hero? I think should it happen and Hugh does join the rest of the boys on stage then there would be some split loyalties. My loyalty is with Paul Roberts and the Stranglers mark 2, not with someone who upped and left hoping the rest wouldn't be able to carry on. I can't imagine how Paul must feel. I think he would be pretty pissed off if Hugh did come back on stage and lots of fans began chanting for Hugh. Paul is important now, I don't think it would be right to invite Hugh to participate in any way (unless we could hang him from the ceiling a.k.a. Rainbow Theatre & friends). Perhaps if he were the support act maybe this would keep some fans happy.

I guess you'll probably get a thousand letters asking/pleading for Hugh to be invited back on stage but here's one fan that just wants to see the Stranglers for what they are now, not what they were. I had some great concerts with Hugh, but some better ones with Paul. If Hugh does appear on stage then I guess I'll have to accept it, applaud him on and applaud him off but my thoughts are with Paul.

Time to let go of the past me thinks, thanks Hugh, but no thanks your time has gone as sure as day follows night, your time has gone and we sing a different song - that of Paul Roberts.

Anyway, that's it, I've said my bit. Hope all is well on the 'single' front and if any of our letters get read by the band then perhaps you'll show this one to Paul.

Regards Nigel Cranfield, Rochford.

The above rumour broadcast by the media, is a complete fabrication, source uncertain.
M.

LOOKING BACK



Decisions, decisions - Children of the 1st Chiswick Scouts at their winter fayre 25 years ago this month, putting in some overtime decision-making on Christmas presents. The Scoutmaster at the time, Henry Patty, said that the day went very well. 400 people packed their headquarters and about £80 was raised for camping equipment.

25 YEARS AGO
Nov 18 1969

THIS IS PAUL
THE OTHER ONE
IS LEE HIS BROTHER.

Dear Marian,

I have sent this picture which appeared in our local paper. It is of Paul when he was a Cub, to show you he was quite normal when he was young. Can't say the same of about him now that he's nearly grown up! He's lovely really, he's the greatest.

All the best,
Evelyn Roberts.

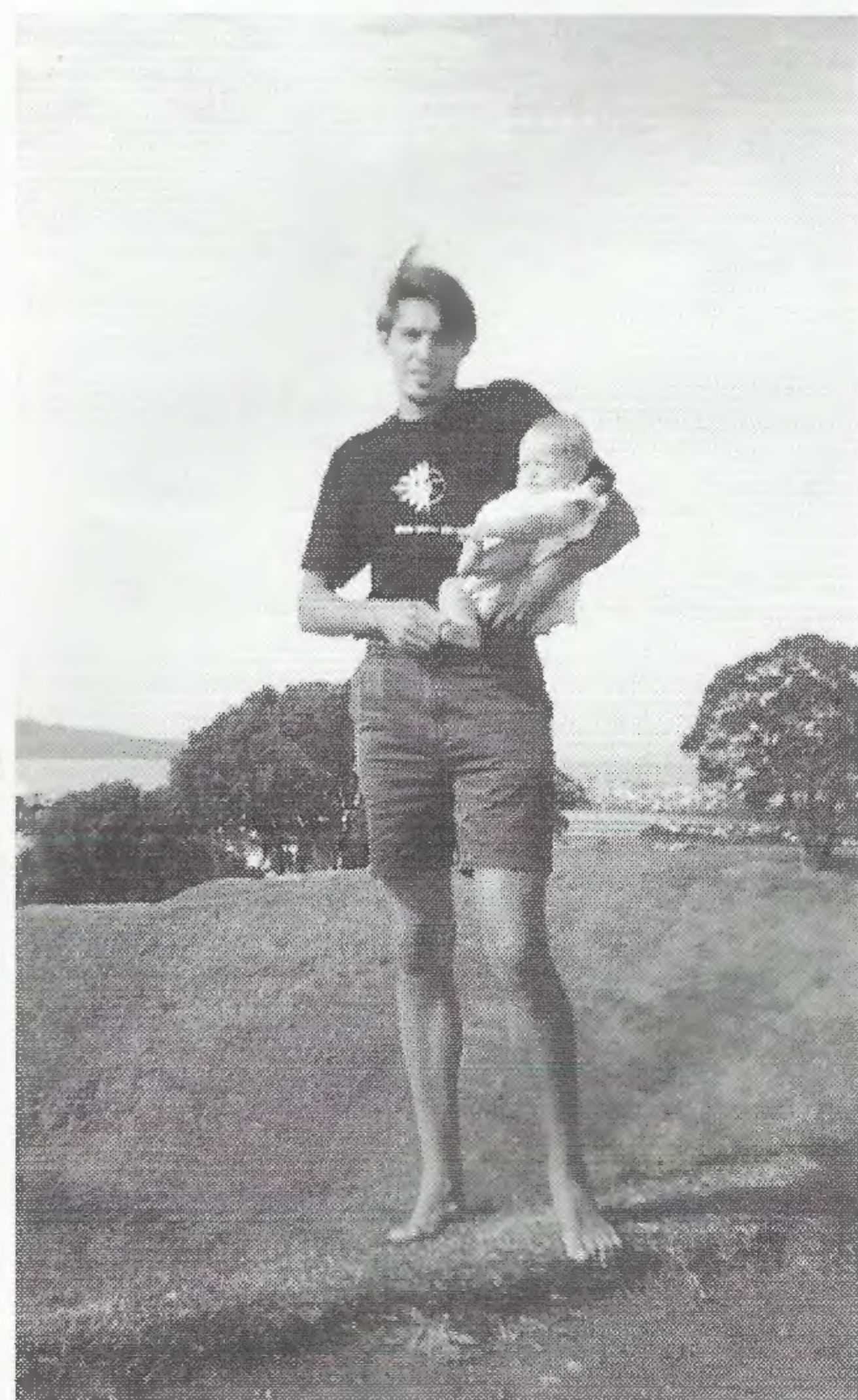
A huge thanks to Paul's Mum for sending the above - altogether now, ahh, inne sweet?!

Dear Marian,

The enclosed photo is me sporting my 'Day Into Night' T-shirt (minus my long hair) and my six month old daughter, Frances. I am sending you it to you in attempt to kill two birds with one photo! I would be really thrilled if it were to be published in Strangled. It was taken in Auckland, New Zealand on an extinct volcano (Mount Eden) and looks out over Auckland City with Rangitoto Island (another extinct volcano) in the background.

Leanne (my wife) and I are mad on the band and now having been in N.Z. for nearly a year are suffering withdrawal symptoms. We will be back in the UK in July for four weeks, so we are hoping that we will be able to catch the band playing live again. If not seeing this photo in the mag would be really great.

All the best
Dave, Leanne & Frances Tomlison



STRANGLERS COLLECTION FOR SALE

including many Japanese pressings, promos and French pressings, vinyl, CD and original French poster. I am looking for memorabilia, original gig posters and promo stuff. Vincendet Serge, 9 Rue des Dechargeurs, 75001 Paris. Fax: +33 1 42 33 25 72.

D'ARCY LOVES LIQUORICE, LACE & LEATHER

– new 16-track CD album out now from Circus in Town (with exclusive artwork by Simon J Webb). Price £8.99 inc. P&P. Please make cheques/POs payable to Circus in Town and send to 200 Jeansway, Dunstable, Beds. LU5 4PR (Tel: 01582 668320).

ONE-OFF SALE: SUZUKI SJ410 Jeep

(Green) – 1984(A), 2 previous owners – the first being the bass player of a band called The Stranglers. Good condition. Serious enquiries only. Documentation intact. Contact Vinny McGrath 0161 626 0496.

WHY NOT BURN UP SOME TIME by hanging one of these around your house. Rat Clocks, in red, black or luminous green. Other colours on request. £10. Tel. Bongo on 01324 563070 or write 2 Ronald Crescent, Larbert, Stirlingshire FK5 3AL.

NICE 'N' SLEAZY Fanzine: Paul Roberts/John Ellis interview; 'Bodysearch' tour '94; S*M*A*S*H; Rub Ultra; Gouge; Create!; Flamingoes; Flying Medallions. Celebrating the excitement, the antagonism, the adrenalin and the sheer thrill of fresh new music.... "Nice 'n' Sleazy" does it! £1.50 + SAE: Ian Pattison, 44 Chorefields, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 1SX.

TONYINBLACK from Crowtree Icerink in Sunderland – just to say a big thank you for all the Stranglers posters, pictures, records, *Strangleds*, (I could go on...). Very nice JJ posters indeed! Thanks again. Love from the sewer – Louisa XX. PS – Hello to Julie B.

WANTED – Issue 32 of *Strangled* magazine. If anybody has a spare copy please get in touch with Fiona Gayna, 19 Brandville Gardens, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1JF.

WANTED – CAMEO live material and rarities. Iain Davie, 45 Bunyan Road, Biggleswade, Beds. SG18 8QQ.

WANTED – 70's JJ-style black Fender Precision, maple neck. Must be in brilliant condition. (JJ – if you're thinking of parting with one of yours – I'm your man). Andy Swallow, 51 Anderson Avenue, Aberdeen AB2 2LR.

WANTED – Xmal Deutschland's Viva CD, Grip CD and Ally Pally video. Write to Ian Macdonald, Govert Flinckstraat 90-E, 1072 EK The Netherlands.

WANTED – H.C. 's Wolf on CD, also any CD singles by HC, JJ, or MIBs. Your reasonable price. Billy Easdale, 12 Auchentorlie Quadrant, Paisley, Scotland PA1 1QY. (Tel: 0141 840 1433).

SAVE £1000 (on the prices quoted by Kenny Miller in *Strangled* 42). For list of ultra-cheap rarities, please send SAE to Tony Stalgis, 29 Woodlands Terrace, Edlington, Doncaster DN12 1LG. Or tell me what you want and I'll give you a reasonable price, eg Always The Sun/Mayan Skies UDA 7" – a mere £6 !!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Colin Mace. Now you're as old as Nigel Cranfield. Love Jane, Katie & Hannah.

CDs WANTED – Mark Mothersbaugh - Music for Insomniacs Vols I & II; The Damned - Live at



Strangled Small Ads are a free service to SIS members. To place an ad write out exactly the wording you want to appear (keep it short and legible please) and send on a separate piece of paper to "Small Ads, Strangled, PO Box 195, Cambridge CB4 2QJ. Don't forget to include your name & address or telephone number in the ad, and please keep it separate from any other letters or orders.

Marble Arch; and any rare demo imports. A big hello to Liz and Vikky (and I'm now a happy Bowie fan because of you!). Congratulations to Vikky for seeing the light, and becoming a MIB-aholic. Veerle in Brighton/Belgium, I'm sorry I've stopped writing but after not hearing from you in close to six months.... If anyone out there takes pity on my pathetic plea for the Mothersbaugh Insomniac albums, I am desperate to add them to my collection. Some bastard must have them stashed. I have warm cash waiting – write to me. Peter Butler, 137 King Edward Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 8DG.

PLEASE PLEASE can anyone help me to get a Stranglers T-shirt. It was on sale at the Bristol gig, 1992. It's black with red through it, with cream skeleton motif on front. Please would someone out there sell me one? Top price paid. VG condition, or good condition. Thanks. Or I have a black one for sale if anyone wants to swap, with Adam & Eve logo or motif. Please contact Cyril Bird on 01705 525470.

FOR SALE – CD Hugh Cornwell (CCW) £20; Pic CD 96 Tears £8; Pic EP Don't Bring Harry £4; Pic CD Sweet Smell of Success (indie Pence mix, House mix, 7" version, instead of Tim's poisonality £12; Stranglers video (sale or swap). Write to Vandenbossche Freddy, 27 Rue de Saintes, 1430 Quenast, Belgium.

FOR SALE – over 100 Stranglers items including many foreign sleeves and standard UK releases. Also a couple of spare issues of *Strangled* Vol 2 Nos 12 & 19. I'm still looking for Vol 1 Nos 1, 3, 4 & 7 – anybody help? I also need people who will swap tapes with me. I'm trying to complete my collection of gigs I've attended. Write to me if you can help. D. Aedy, 109 Albert Drive, Glasgow G41 2SU.

FOR SALE – *Strangled* Vol 2, issues 1 to 41. Will sell separately or full set, to highest offer(s). Also large collection of Stranglers records, including pic discs, 12" singles, solo LPs and singles, foreign pressings etc. Send SAE for full list. Malcolm Green, 2 Ashgrove Court, Methilhill, Fife KY8 2EN.

"GIRL FROM THE SNOW COUNTRY" Mint condition. Personalised/signed if required. £300. c/o PO Box 195, Cambridge CB4 2QJ.

EAST LANCs AREA: – I am thinking of running a coach to the next Stranglers concert of the 1995 tour locally. If you live in Blackburn/Burnley area and are interested in a cheap & cheerful piss-up to Manchester/Liverpool/wherever, please write to Paul, 18 Clarke Street, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs.

FOR SALE: Huge Stranglers collection – includes UK & import: Sleeves, demos, T/PS,

solo, 7", 12", LPs etc. Over 500 records. Write or phone for list: J. Brown, 90 Astbury Road, Peckham, London SE15 2NW (Tel: 0171 639 8083).

FOR SALE: Rattus (white label test pressing) £45 ono; Rain & Dole 7" (promo) £10 ono; Midnight Summer Dream 7" (promo) £5; Paradise 7" (promo) £5. Neil Harris, 20 Glenesh Road, Great Sutton, South Wirral, L66 4NV. (Tel: 0151 339 1880).

STEVE TYAS – Please get in touch. Paul Thompson, 52-58 Wordsworth Terrace, Chorley, Lancs. Tel: 01257 266082. "And come along – our adventure begins" (Sherlock Holmes).

COMING YOUR WAY..... Large collection of 7"/12"/promos/imports. Please send SAE to 8 Bridge Street, Langley Park, Co. Durham.

FOR SALE – Sometimes/Go Buddy Go 7" single, Japanese import, pic cover with lyrics both in Japanese and English, excellent mint condition and I'm asking for between £125 and £150 for it. Original **Shah Shahagogo/Bearcage** 12" single (double 'A' side), in the original United Artists brown & white sleeve (I believe this is a very rare item), also in excellent mint condition, £300–£350. Original **Peaches** in the original cover (plain white), double 'A' side with Go Buddy Go, on the Albion Music/April Music Ltd label, excellent mint condition, £250–£350. **No More Heroes** in a plain white cover with a red wreath, double 'A' side with In The Shadows (also on the same label); **Walk On By** in white vinyl; **Choosie Susie** on the Liberty label – for these three singles in excellent, mint condition, I'm asking £300–£400. **Picture Disc Album "10"** also in very good condition. Write to Kenny Miller, 7 Achray Drive, Cornton, Stirling, Scotland FK9 5DR, or phone 0786 472060 before 10pm.

SWAP 96 Tears Pic Disc for H.C. Dreaming Again C.O.S. or R.W.T.S. 7" or swap for any Stranglers S.P.D., S.L.A.L., A.D.A.A.O.T.N., N.M., N.I.N., B.I.A. 12" Offers to Paul Lindop, 8 Kildonan Place, Hodge Lea, Milton Keynes MK12 6SQ.

FOR SALE: Large Collection of live Stranglers tapes bulk discounts available. Write to: Roy Smith, 58 Barfield, Sutton-at-Hone, Kent DA4 9EL.

NATALIE from Leamington Spa: Wearing the red Offspring T-shirt at the Offspring gig Friday 28th April at Wolverhampton Civic Hall. I never did get your number so give us a call. Pete: Telford (01952) 505040.

SEND ME your Want/Swap/Sale lists! I will do likewise! Stranglers only. Greg Greathouse, 2172 10th St. SW, Akron, Ohio, USA 44314. Tel: (216) 7532872 (2pm - 3am UK).

THE STRANGLERS FOR SALE

Early singles & "Euroman Cometh" Promo Flag & Rarities
French Language "Strangled" mags & etc.

SAE to Mark, 3 Lower Paxton Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 1PG

DISCOGRAPHY

Compiled by Owen Carne

The discography is for UK issues. Re-issue albums on 'Nice Price' etc or when two or more albums have been placed in a slip case will also not be included unless they have been re-packaged completely. The label in each case will be the original label and the original catalogue number will be printed. Singles/solo album discographies are available from SIS on request.

ALBUMS

Title	Catalogue No.	Label	Date	Format
Rattus Norvegicus	UAG 30045	U.A.	1977	LP, CD, CAS
No More Heroes	UAG 30200	U.A.	1977	LP, CD, CAS
Black and White	UAG 30222	U.A.	1978	LP, CD, CAS
Live X-Cert	UAG 30224	U.A.	1978	LP, CD, CAS
The Raven	UAG 30262	U.A.	1979	LP, CD, CAS
The Meninblack	LBG 30313	Liberty	1981	LP, CD, CAS
La Folie	LBG 30342	Liberty	1981	LP, CD, CAS
The Collection 1977-82	LBG 30353	Liberty	1982	LP, CD, CAS
Feline	Epic 25237	Epic	1983	LP, CD, CAS
Aural Sculpture	EPC 26220	Epic	1984	LP, CD, CAS
Off The Beaten Track	LBG 5001	Liberty	1986	LP, CAS
Dreamtime	EPC 26648	Epic	1986	LP, CD, CAS, PD
All Live and All of the Night	EPC 460259	Epic	1988	LP, CD, CAS
Rarities	EMS 1306	Liberty	1988	LP, CD, CAS
Singles (The UA Years)	EM 1314	Liberty	1989	LP, CD, CAS
10	4664831	Epic	1990	LP, CD, CAS, PD
Greatest Hits 1977-1990	4675411	Epic	1990	LP, CD, CAS, PCD
All Twelve Inches	4714162	Epic	1992	CD, CAS
The Early Years - '74,'75,'76	SPEAK 101	Newspeak	1992	LP, CD, CAS
Live At The Hope & Anchor	7987892	EMI	1992	CD, CAS
Feline/Dreamtime ("Nice Price Two Originals" series)	4668352	Epic	1992	CD
Strangers In The Night	WOLCD 1030	Psycho	1992	LP, CD, CAS
The Old Testament (4-CD box + book)	CD STRANG1	EMI	1992	CD/Book
Saturday Night, Sunday Morning	ESS(CD/LP/MC)194	Castle Communications	1993	LP, CD, CAS
Death & Night & Blood	RRCD187	Receiver	1994	CD
Strangled: From Birth & Beyond	SIS CD001	S.I.S.	1994	CD
The Strangers & Friends	RRCD195	Trojan/ Receiver Records	1995	CD
About Time	WENC001/MC001	When? (through Castle Communications)	1995	CD, CAS, LP*

* 3000 Limited Edition

SIS LABEL LISTING

Since 1980, every audio or video release on the SIS label has been designated a coveted SIS catalogue number. So, 15 years after the first release on the label 'Tomorrow Was (The Hereafter)', we thought that with 1995 being SIS's 18th birthday year it was time to print the definitive listing of all SIS releases to date. The listing gives the year of release, format and other information about each item.

Cat. No.	Year	Artist/Title (The Strangers unless indicated otherwise)	Format	Comments
SIS001	1980	'Tomorrow Was' (The Hereafter)	7"	1000 in P/S
SIS002	1985	A Marriage of Convenience - 'My Young Dreams'	7"	All in P/S, Jet on Drums
SIS003	1988	JJ Burnel - 'Goebbels, Mosley, God & Ingrams'	Flexi	Given free with Strangled
SIS004	1990	'New Day Today'	Flexi	Given free with Strangled
SIS005	1990	'Live In Madrid'	PAL VHS Video	
SIS006	1991	'The MeninblackinFrench'	PAL VHS Video	
SIS007	1992	'SIS First World Convention'	PAL VHS Video	First live video of Mk. 2 Band
SIS008	1993	'Battersea Plus'	PAL VHS Video	
SIS009	1993	'Live at Fontwell Park'	PAL VHS Video	With pic. sleeve
SIS010	1994	'Live in Rennes & Other Stories'	PAL VHS Video	With pic. sleeve
SISCD001	1994	'Strangled From Birth & Beyond'	CD	All songs exclusive to SIS
SISCD002	1994	JJ Burnel - 'Un Jour Parfait'	CD	3 extra tracks compared to now deleted Epic France release
SIS011	1994	'Bodysearch - Live In London'	PAL VHS Video	With pic. sleeve
SIS012	1995	'The Parr Street Chronicles'	PAL VHS Video	With pic. sleeve

(All items with catalogue number in bold print are still available from SIS at the current date)